

ARAB STATES, ARAB INTEREST GROUPS AND ANTI-ZIONIST  
MOVEMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE US

Thesis

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## Abstract English

This thesis analyzes the history of the transnational pro-Arab and anti-Zionist network in Western Europe and the US from the start of its activity in the 1920s until the mid-1970s, when the PLO achieved several international diplomatic successes. Since the Palestine conflict's start, the Arab national movement led by Amin al-Husseini had sought to involve other Arab and Islamic actors to add weight to their cause. Parallely, it developed an infrastructure to influence Western public opinion. The resultant transnational advocacy network enjoyed the support of Arab states, which competed over influence on Palestine and numerous non-Arab anti-Zionist activists motivated by a diverse array of ideologies. After 1944, the Arab League coordinated a propaganda campaign against Zionism, which failed to prevent the partition of Palestine. In the 1950s however, the Arab League under the sponsorship of Egypt vastly expanded its propaganda network. Besides advocating Egypt's foreign policy goals, it sought to mainstream Palestinian nationalism. Fatah, which later took over the PLO, meanwhile built its own network, closely interacting with the ascendant New Left. This network was simultaneously involved in propaganda and terrorist activities against Israel and Western targets. The threat of terrorism and economic repercussions by Arab states were eventually successful in pushing Western European governments to accept Palestinian demands and distance themselves from Israel.

# Abstract Deutsch

Diese Arbeit analysiert die Geschichte des transnationalen pro-arabischen und antizionistischen Netzwerks in Westeuropa und den USA bis Mitte der 1970er Jahre. Seit Beginn des Palästina-Konflikts hatte die von Amin al-Husseini geführte arabische Nationalbewegung versucht, andere arabische und islamische Akteure einzubeziehen, um ihrer Sache mehr Gewicht zu verleihen. Parallel dazu entwickelte sie eine Infrastruktur zur Beeinflussung der westlichen öffentlichen Meinung. Das daraus resultierende transnationale Unterstützungsnetzwerk genoss die Unterstützung arabischer Staaten, die um den Einfluss auf Palästina konkurrierten, und zahlreicher nicht-arabischer antizionistischer Aktivisten, die durch eine Vielzahl von Ideologien motiviert waren. Nach 1944 koordinierte die Arabische Liga eine Propagandakampagne gegen den Zionismus, die die Teilung Palästinas nicht verhindern konnte. In den 1950er Jahren baute die Arabische Liga unter der Schirmherrschaft Ägyptens dieses Propagandanetzwerk weiter aus. Neben dem Eintreten für die außenpolitischen Ziele Ägyptens war es bestrebt, den palästinensischen Nationalismus fördern. Die Fatah, die später die PLO übernahm, baute gleichzeitig ein eigenes Netzwerk auf, indem sie eng mit der aufsteigenden Neuen Linken zusammenarbeitete. Dieses Netzwerk war sowohl an Propaganda- als auch an Terroraktivitäten gegen Israel und westliche Ziele beteiligt. Die Bedrohung durch den Terrorismus und wirtschaftlichen Sanktionen der arabischen Staaten bewegten die westeuropäischen Regierungen schliesslich dazu, palästinensische Forderungen zu akzeptieren und sich von Israel zu distanzieren.

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# Introduction

The Civil War in Syria and the crisis in Saudi-American relations have moved the lobbying efforts of Arab states in the US into the media spotlight. According to a *Washington Post* article, lobbying in foreign capitals has become a multimillion-dollar industry, employing analysts, PR experts and many others in recent years.<sup>1</sup> This, however, is not a new phenomenon. In fact, lobbying activities by foreign governments and political organizations have a long pedigree. Arab interest groups have sought to influence Western foreign public opinion since the 1920s, when the first anti-Zionist and pro-Arab organizations were established in Europe and the US. Nevertheless, the activities of Arab interest groups and local anti-Zionist activists have generally received very limited scholarly attention apart from “*cursory historical study*”, as Rory Miller concluded almost two decades ago.<sup>2</sup> This lack of scholarly interest is especially glaring when compared with the scrutiny dedicated to the alleged workings of the ‘Zionist Lobby’. While these still stir both scholarly interest and exaggerated, often conspiratorial, fantasies, evidence that pro-Arab activists have been active in similar actions since the Balfour Declaration in 1917 has often been conveniently ignored and is therefore missing from the narrative on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This work is concerned with the ways pro-Arab interest groups sought to influence public opinion and foreign policy regarding the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine before and after the founding of Israel. It studies the history and evolution of a pro-Arab network in the US, Britain, Germany and Switzerland over a period of almost 60 years. In these countries, both pro-Arab, Zionist and later pro-Israeli activists fought to gain the favor of the larger public in a third state. This struggle is not without precedents.

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<sup>1</sup> Ho, Catherine. “Saudi Government Has Vast Network of PR, Lobby Firms in U.S.” *The Washington Post*, April 20, 2016.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/04/20/saudi-government-has-vast-network-of-pr-lobby-firms-in-u-s/>.

<sup>2</sup> Rory Miller, *Divided against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948*, vol. 11 (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000), 2.

Previous propaganda wars have for instance occurred in the United States during the First World War between Germany and Britain, both powers vying for the support of the American public.<sup>3</sup> What distinguishes the Arab-Israeli propaganda struggle from others is its endurance and the complexity of its actors, having involved individual activists, non-state actors and states: Israeli, Arab and even third states. In fact, we are speaking of an international advocacy network, which promoted the anti-Zionist cause during this lengthy period. This international advocacy network counted several setbacks and successes. For almost three decades, it strove to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine – and spectacularly failed when the UN endorsed partition in November 1947.

The history of these activities bear evidence to the fact that, since the early mandate period, the Arab-Israeli conflict had an international dimension and transcended the borders of Palestine. This also resulted from the nature of the parties involved in the conflict. Both Arab nationalism and Pan-Islamism, as well as Zionism were transnational movements. This international dimension of the conflict raised the stakes involved and contributed to its escalation. The first Arab-Israeli war of 1948/1949, which started as a civil war after the UN partition decision, led to considerable casualties on both sides. A majority of the Arab inhabitants fled the future Jewish state, partly motivated by fear enhanced by Arab atrocity propaganda, and partly expelled by the conquering Israeli armies. They and their descendants, who settled in refugee camps in Israel's neighboring countries, came to remember the events as the *Nakba* (Engl. catastrophe), a source of national trauma. Palestine, a geographical concept which had no deep historic tradition among the native Arabs and had been considered by most to be a part of Syria, became a place of yearning – much as it had been for the Jewish diaspora for 2000 years. This yearning stimulated the growth of a distinct Palestinian nationalism and inspired a revisionist agenda, which sought to undo the defeat by dismantling the nascent Jewish state, Israel. For the Palestinian Jews, now known as the Israelis, the war, which they called the War of Independence, ended in military triumph. Israel defeated the invading Arab armies and extended its borders

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<sup>3</sup> Ben D. Mor, "The Rhetoric of Public Diplomacy and Propaganda Wars: A View from Self-Presentation Theory," *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 5 (August 1, 2007): 668, doi:10.1111/j.1475-6765.2007.00707.x.



beyond the partition lines, albeit shying away from conquering the whole of Palestine, as many soldiers, including later peace president Yitzchak Rabin, had wished. But the victory came at a significant material and human cost for the country's Jews. The conflict also affected the Jewish diaspora. The Jews in Arab and Islamic countries suffered from increasing anti-Semitic violence and discrimination, which resulted in their continuing flight to Western countries and to Israel, where they often received only a lukewarm welcome. In the Soviet-dominated Eastern Bloc, which soon switched sides in the conflict, the surviving Jews were equally subjected to increasing anti-Semitism, which masqueraded itself as anti-Zionism.

The first Arab-Israeli war did not resolve the conflict over Palestine, as the Israelis hoped, but only heralded the start of a new phase. Although the existence of Israel was momentarily secured, in the mind of the Israelis, this existence remained precarious. Faced by the overwhelming economic and demographic weight of the Arab world, Israel's existence had to be constantly reasserted. One central element of the Israeli strategy was to keep the military edge. This could only be guaranteed through the support of a Great Power. Israel's dependence on this support presented a permanent weak point, as its Arab opponents rightly recognized. It was therefore a focal point of the activities of the anti-Zionist network. Since the mid-1940s, the Arab League was the most important element of this network. It was instrumental in building a global propaganda network to advocate the Arab and later the Palestinian cause. As I will show in this study, this network was eventually responsible for the revolution in the international arena in the mid-1970s, when the right of the Palestinians to their own state was internationally recognized. This development has often astounded observers and continues to do so. Thus, the historian Paul Chamberlin has asked: *"How, for instance, do we understand the success of the PLO? While the organization failed to achieve many of its objectives – such as the creation of a Palestinian state, the formation of a unified leadership – it proved surprisingly successful on the international stage."*<sup>4</sup> I hope that my study will provide insight into this question.

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order*, Oxford Studies in International History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21.

There is a glossary of notions to describe the process of influencing opinions in order to change policies. Often, this vocabulary is ill-defined and subject to fashion. In my work, I use the notions of propaganda, public diplomacy and less often lobbying. This warrants some definitions. Lobbying is part of the democratic system, especially in the US, where it has a long tradition. However, many use the notion of lobbying to imply that the activity is illegitimate. Thus, those speaking of a 'Zionist', 'Israeli' or even 'Jewish Lobby' have often sought to insinuate that these lobbies are manipulating US foreign policy at the behest of a minority with detrimental consequences for larger US interests. In this vein, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt have alleged with regard to US policy in the Middle East, that *"the overall thrust of U.S. policy in the region is due primarily to U.S. domestic politics and especially to the activities of the 'Israel lobby.'* Other special-interest groups have managed to skew U.S. foreign policy in directions they favored, but no lobby has managed to divert U.S. foreign policy as far from what the American national interest would otherwise suggest, while simultaneously convincing Americans that U.S. and Israeli interests are essentially identical."<sup>5</sup> In fact, both authors rehashed a narrative of events which has been put forward by US opponents of Zionism since 1948.<sup>6</sup> If there is ground for speaking of a Zionist Lobby, it would make just as much sense to speak of an Arab Lobby, as one recent author has indeed done.<sup>7</sup> Such lobbies are best described as foreign policy interest groups. Per definition, they strive to exert influence on the foreign policy of the state. Interest groups may be state- or non-state actors, but often, this distinction is difficult to make. Both states and non-state interest groups have an interest in hiding their involvement in lobbying. Often, interest groups may therefore use other actors, or front groups, to lobby on their behalf. They do so out of the conviction that their arguments are more credible and more neutral when not directly tied to state interests.

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<sup>5</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 30.

<sup>6</sup> The foundation text of this narrative is Kermit Roosevelt, *The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics*, Pamphlet 7 (The Institute of Arab American Affairs, 1948).

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell Geoffrey Bard, *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East* (Harper New York, 2010).

The most accentuated form of this behavior is astroturfing, a term that describes a campaign seeking to create the illusion of a broad-based movement in order to reach political goals, while hiding the identity of the campaign planners. The use of front groups can be an element of subversion. One often finds examples of such subversive tactics in the history of the anti-Zionist movement. Thus, during the trial against the Palestinian terrorists who had attacked an El-Al plane at the Zurich airport in 1969, left-wing anti-Zionist groups mounted a campaign to change Switzerland's position towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. While those activists who operated in public were locals, the strategies and the talking points had been devised and coordinated by the Arab League in Geneva, as will be discussed in this study. In fact, these local interest groups acted as information agents for the Arab states. In other words, they were instruments of their public diplomacy outreach.

The concept of public diplomacy needs further clarification. According to Manheim, public diplomacy is defined as the “ (...) *efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage*”.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Joseph Nye, who more than anybody else has coined the contemporary understanding of the term, speaks of an “*instrument that governments use to mobilize these resources to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely their governments. Public diplomacy tries to attract by drawing attention to these potential resources through broadcasting, subsidizing cultural exports, arranging exchanges, and so forth.*”<sup>9</sup> The deficiency of these definitions is however that they are limited to states. What we are interested in is how an anti-Zionist advocacy network was able to influence foreign public opinion and policy. This study therefore employs a more extended understanding of the concept of public diplomacy. In my definition, public diplomacy describes the concerted or un-concerted actions of a network of state actors, non-state actors and individuals to influence the public in order to achieve a common foreign policy goal. There are several types of relationships between states and non-state

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<sup>8</sup> Jarol B. Manheim, *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence* (Oxford University Press on Demand, 1994), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008): 95.

interest groups. First, states may act as an interest group, making use of their official representation as well as their embassy and diplomatic staff. Secondly, states have the option of establishing an interest group with which they are openly and directly related. Thus, states may open a public diplomacy office, which distributes propaganda among the public or engages the press and political shapers. This was the case in the 1940s, when the Arab League opened such an institution in Washington D.C. in view of the upcoming partition vote in the UN. Often, the relationships between states and interest groups are more indirect. Third, local interest groups may receive – sometimes covertly – support from foreign states to act as fronts. Fourth, interest groups may act independently from states, but share policy goals and convictions with these foreign states. Fifth, a mix of independent convictions and state support may exist. One method to influence public opinion is propaganda. Is propaganda therefore an element of public diplomacy? It is worth mentioning that there is no consensus on the difference between the concepts of propaganda and public diplomacy in the scholarly literature. Thus, Mor argues that the latter is just a euphemism for the former.<sup>10</sup> I tend to disagree. In fact, public diplomacy is a much broader notion, which includes different methods to influence the policy of another state by both direct and indirect means.

As an historian of propaganda, one has to come to terms with the unease that both the word itself and the method of propaganda evokes, particularly in Western societies. This is because the wide-ranging use of propaganda by totalitarian states, in particular Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, is still a fresh memory. However, while such grotesque examples of propaganda as Moscow's show trials in the 1930s or Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* are most often associated with propaganda, they are rather the exception than the norm. Ultimately, every entity finds it necessary to shape its image and explain its actions. Propaganda is a forceful, reflected and strategic approach to this general need, one which aims to influence, or in the negative sense, to manipulate, opinion. The vessels of propaganda are unlimited. In theory, anything that can carry information can also transmit propaganda. In reality, however, propaganda usually uses printed material, speeches and demonstrations, tv or radio shows to exert influence. While authoritarian states have shown little restraint in applying propaganda, Democratic states have struggled with

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<sup>10</sup> Mor, "The Rhetoric of Public Diplomacy and Propaganda Wars," 678.

this method. They have come up with similar solutions to their predicament. In World War II for instance, the allies devised an emblematic “*Strategy of Truth*”, although of course they did not always follow it.<sup>11</sup> Israel uses *Hasbara* (Engl. explanation) to explain its policies to foreign audiences.<sup>12</sup> Most of the Arab states, foremost Egypt, have been undemocratic since the 1950s. They therefore occasionally employed false propaganda, like in the case of Egypt during the Six-Day War, when it claimed that Britain and the US were involved in the war too.<sup>13</sup> This was a question which was also internally debated. It was recognized by several Arab propagandists in the West, including Cecil Hourani, that if one wanted to maintain the credibility of Arab propaganda and achieve results in the West, it was necessary to follow a moderate and reliable approach. This study however uses the term propaganda in a non-normative way, considering it to be a natural tool in the communication strategy of every state. It does not have to be necessarily abusive, but often serves the state’s legitimate interests. From a realist perspective, it is not important whether the arguments made by propaganda meet the standards of social norms, but rather whether they are believed to do so.<sup>14</sup> As an historian however, I see it as my duty to discuss the facticity of propaganda and not merely present it. After all, it is not my intention to become a purveyor of propaganda.

As noted, propaganda is a notion which has gone out of fashion. This is a great deficiency. Propaganda is a form of communication. Our world today is more than ever shaped by communication. Every functioning, democratic civil society harbors organizations with the main function of communicating with and influencing the public in their direction. In a globalized world, this happens transnationally. Due to accelerated globalization since the 1990s, the awareness for and study of transnational networks has boomed. But we tend to overestimate the novelty of these developments.

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<sup>11</sup> Phillip M. Taylor, “Perception Management and the ‘War’ against Terrorism,” *Journal of Information Warfare* 1, no. 3 (2002): 20.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Cummings, *Israel’s Public Diplomacy: The Problems of Hasbara, 1966-1975* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Random House Publishing Group, 2017), 251–63.

<sup>14</sup> Mor, “The Rhetoric of Public Diplomacy and Propaganda Wars,” 664.

In fact, a global communicative space has existed for a long time. As I will show, the activists and organizations studied in this work already operated on the stage of a global communicative space to advocate their interests seventy years before the advent of the most recent information revolution. They thus formed a transnational advocacy network. But what does this concept mean?

In economics, networks have been defined as a loose form of organization, which is flexible and malleable. Adopting this understanding, Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink see networks as groups of actors, *“that share values and frequently exchange information and services. The flow of information among actors in the network reveals a dense web of connections among these groups, both formal and informal.”*<sup>15</sup> In fact, Keck and Sikkink have recognized that such transnational advocacy networks have had an important impact on policy change. Through the process of framing, they can shape how issues are perceived.<sup>16</sup> How the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine underwent repeated framings, for instance from a religious conflict to a nationalist conflict and vice versa, is studied in this work. To the outside observer, networks are often difficult to recognize. Depending on the purpose of a network, this characteristic can be useful. Clandestine groups therefore tend to organize themselves as networks. This is both true for a human rights movement in an authoritarian state as well as for a terrorist organization. Indeed, networks are the preferred form of organization for subversive movements. This also has been recognized in contemporary counterterrorism, which relies heavily on network analysis.<sup>17</sup> Some parts of the anti-Zionist network in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s in fact operated like a clandestine network. It was connected to illegal or semi-legal organizations like Fatah, the PLO and GUPS.

The anti-Zionist movement analyzed in this study primarily consisted of non-Jews. Anti-Zionism is not the domain of Non-Jews only, however. On the contrary, before the

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<sup>15</sup> Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” *International Social Science Journal* 51, no. 159 (1999): 91–92.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 89–90.

<sup>17</sup> Song Yang, Franziska B. Keller, and Lu Zheng, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Examples* (SAGE Publications, 2016), 151–57.

Holocaust, anti-Zionism was predominantly part of an inner-Jewish discourse. The conflict between Zionist and non- or anti-Zionist Jews played out against the background of the 'Jewish question', i.e. the debate on the future of the Jewish minority in Europe, which was threatened by Anti-Semitism. Zionism emphasized the national identity of the Jews, awarding them national rights, which they strived to realize in Palestine. As Jews constituted a nation, they would also forever remain foreigners among the Europeans and anti-Semitism would persist. Thus, the 'Jewish Question' could only be resolved by the establishment of a Jewish nation state in the Land of Israel or Palestine. Anti-Zionist Jews on the other hand, whether liberal or religious, tended to argue that Judaism was primarily a religion. Consequently, the answer to anti-Semitism lay in assimilation. Moreover, they feared that the Zionists' insistence on the national separateness of Jews would empower anti-Semites. The murder of the majority of the European Jews during the Holocaust effectively ended the 'Jewish Question'. The dichotomy of assimilation versus Zionism lost its relevance, at least in Europe. The major expression of anti-Zionism after the Holocaust became non-Jewish, although non-Jewish anti-Zionists would often co-opt remaining Jewish anti-Zionist groups to link up with the tradition of Jewish anti-Zionism before the Holocaust. Usually, this was with the purpose of shielding themselves from accusations of anti-Semitism. However, given the different historical and sociological context, non-Jewish anti-Zionism is fundamentally different from Jewish anti-Zionism and should not be confused with it. Its most distinctive feature is that it does not pertain to the 'Jewish Question'. This study concentrates on non-Jewish anti-Zionism.

It is necessary to emphasize that this is not a study about anti-Semitism, but anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionism can be defined in simple terms as a political conviction that is opposed to the ideology and goals of the Zionist movement. Naturally, with the progression of time, not only Zionism, but also anti-Zionism, changed. After the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Anti-Zionism meant the opposition to a Jewish national home in Palestine. A national home did not always necessarily mean a state, but increasingly assumed this meaning since the partition of Palestine was discussed in the late 1930s. After 1948, anti-Zionism needs to be understood as the opposition to the existence of Israel as a nation state of the Jewish people. Besides their opposition to Zionism, anti-Zionists tend to share a number of convictions which are discussed in this study. One of the core convictions is that the Jews do not constitute a nation, but a religion, and do therefore not possess national rights. My choice of anti-Zionist activists and

organizations in this study should not be controversial. They have seldom made a secret of their convictions, as they consider these to be neither morally nor politically dubious. Most of the organizations and activists discussed in this study thus openly called themselves anti-Zionists and have voiced anti-Zionist opinions.

Not every supporter of the national independence of the Arab states, a Palestinian state or the Palestinian refugees was or is anti-Zionist in his convictions. These are different concepts, which should not be confused. One could be both perfectly pro-Arab and pro-Zionist, as can be shown by different examples. Thus, Zionist leaders have repeatedly stressed vis-à-vis Arab statesmen that Zionism was not at odds with Arab nationalism.<sup>18</sup> The Two-State-Solution, which was accepted by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority as a basis for negotiations, is also a reflection of this basic fact. It equally seeks to conciliate the existence of a Jewish state and the demand for an Arab-Palestinian state in the geographic territory of Palestine. Indeed, many of those who have worked to bring about peace between the Israelis, the Arabs and the Palestinians are motivated by a concern for the national wellbeing of those communities.

Nevertheless, this should not blind us to the fact that many supporters of Arab or Palestinian national interests were anti-Zionists, and vice versa, and saw no possibility to reconcile these views. The same is true for the connection between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Not every anti-Semite was an anti-Zionist, nor was every anti-Zionist an anti-Semite. However, this should not lead us to the false conclusion that there is never a connection between the two concepts. Indeed, contemporary empirical research continues to show that anti-Zionism often serves as a politically accepted cover for anti-Semitism.<sup>19</sup> While Western anti-Zionists usually seek to distance themselves from anti-Semitism, Arab and Muslim anti-Zionism is generally not shy about its association with anti-Semitism, and is often justified through anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, as will be shown in Chapter One. As we will see in this study, numerous anti-Zionist activists harbored anti-Semitic concepts, in particular fantasies

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<sup>18</sup> Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy, Volume 2: Arab-Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate* (Routledge, 2015), 15.

<sup>19</sup> Florette Cohen et al., "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 2 (2009): 290.



about Jewish power and wealth. Often, those who criticize anti-Zionists as anti-Semitic are accused of being politically motivated. Being aware of this widespread accusation, a claim of anti-Semitism in this study is always backed up by sources.

I first became interested in the topic of pro-Arab propaganda in the West during the research for my master thesis at the University of Zurich. Originally, I had intended to write on the PFLP terrorism wave against Switzerland in the years 1969/70. In the course of my research at the Swiss Federal Archive, I became aware of a trove of files dealing with the activities of Swiss anti-Zionist groups that organized a public campaign on behalf of Palestinian terrorists standing trial in Switzerland in 1969. Pursuing these leads, I became aware of an extensive pro-Arab network, which included local Swiss activists, Arab diplomatic personnel and Arab League officials. It was clear to see from the Swiss archival material that this network had a high level of sophistication and operated across borders. I therefore decided to expand the scope of my research and investigate the anti-Zionist network in Western Europe and the US in the broad time period between the Balfour Declaration and the talks between the European Economic Council and the Arab states in the late 1970s. Some of the research of my master thesis, which matched this research topic, was included in this study.

This study is situated within the wider research on anti-Zionism but deviates significantly from its paradigms. There is a rich and growing body of literature on the bilateral relations between the US, European states and Israel. In contrast to this, research on organized non-Jewish anti-Zionism remains scarce. No comprehensive study on international anti-Zionist networks exists to date. However, several books have touched on the subject on the national level and deserve to be mentioned. The first systematic study of Jewish, Christian and Arab-American organized anti-Zionism in the US was written in 1979, but no similar study has followed since.<sup>20</sup> Jewish anti-Zionism, most prominently represented by Elmer Berger and the American Council for

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<sup>20</sup> Stuart E. Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941* (New York, N.Y: Robert Speller & Sons, 1979).

Judaism, has repeatedly attracted scholarly interest.<sup>21</sup> Protestant anti-Zionist sentiment, in particular in missionary circles, has been the subject of many studies and is well-documented. However, only a few studies have dealt with organized Protestant anti-Zionism. Brian Fishman's 1973 work is still the most comprehensive and original account of organized Protestant anti-Zionism in the US.<sup>22</sup> Rory Miller provided the first systematic study on organized opposition to Zionism in the UK, prior to partition. He also wrote two insightful papers on Arab anti-Zionism in the UK and the US in the same period.<sup>23</sup> His results often provide a starting point for my own research. A recent monograph on the history of Arab communities in the US provides a wealth of insight into their early anti-Zionist activities in the US and has also informed this project.<sup>24</sup> Post-WWII anti-Zionist groups in the US have received less scholarly attention. CIA support for anti-Zionist groups has been the focus of a new study. The most comprehensive study of Arab league propaganda activities in the US is a dissertation from 1973, which is thus quite dated.<sup>25</sup>

Most works dealing with anti-Zionism in Europe after WWII either discuss the problematic relationship between the Left and Israel or the policies in the former

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Jack Ross, *Rabbi Outcast: Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism* (Potomac Books, Inc., 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Hertz Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973).

<sup>23</sup> Miller, *Divided against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948*; Rory Miller, "More Sinned Against than Sinning? The Case of the Arab Office, Washington, 1945–1948," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 15, no. 2 (2004): 303–325, doi:10.1080/09592290490448843; Rory Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," *Israel Affairs* 5, no. 4 (1999): 198–228, doi:10.1080/13537129908719538.

<sup>24</sup> Hani J. Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans: From Syrian Nationalism to U.S. Citizenship* (University of Texas Press, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Abdulrahman Abdulla Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States" (Ph.D., 1973).

Eastern Bloc.<sup>26</sup> The subject of organized anti-Zionism is only mentioned in passing.<sup>27</sup> Especially in Germany, there is a vivid discussion on left-wing anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Two recent studies by Wolfgang Kraushaar have significantly advanced our knowledge of left-wing terrorism against Jews and Israelis.<sup>28</sup> Opposition to Israel is understood within the context of German secondary anti-Semitism, meaning anti-Semitism caused by “*guilt deflection*” (Ger. *Schuldabwehr*). Research on anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in Germany is therefore generally very focused on German activists, and Arab anti-Zionist networks have not yet been the subject of any particular study, although they were especially strong in Germany, as shown in a recent work by an Israeli historian.<sup>29</sup> The influence of visiting students from the Third World on the German student movement in the 1960s has recently been underlined in a study by Quinn Slobodian. This same study makes only brief mention of Arab students, however.<sup>30</sup> A study by Christina Späti on the Swiss left and Israel also fails to address

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<sup>26</sup> See for instance the excellent Robert S. Wistrich, *From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, the Jews, and Israel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Colin Shindler, *Israel and the European Left: Between Solidarity and Delegitimization* (New York, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> See for instance Dave Rich, *The Left’s Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and Anti-Semitism* (Biteback Publishing, 2016); Martin W. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke* (Frankfurt am Main: Haag + Herchen Verlag, 1990).

<sup>28</sup> Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, 1. Aufl. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005); Wolfgang Kraushaar, “*Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?*”: München 1970: über die antisemitischen Wurzeln des deutschen Terrorismus (München, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Ido Zelkowitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine: Books, Guns and Politics* (London, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Duke University Press, 2012).

the role played by foreign activists in Switzerland.<sup>31</sup> In sum, the scope of efforts by Arab activists and organizations to influence public opinion in Europe and the US has not been recognized. This also seems to be a consequence of the general lack of research into the political activities of Arab and other non-Western transnational organizations. Thus, there is no scholarly history of the Arab League, although it is one of the oldest and most influential supranational organizations in the world. On the basis of my source material, I have come to the conclusion that the Arab factor in the anti-Zionist movement has generally been neglected. According to my research, Arabs have been the drivers of an international anti-Zionist network since the 1920s and were not mere bystanders. By the late 1920s, the issue of Palestine had become thoroughly internationalized in Arab politics through the propaganda work of Mufti Amin al-Husseini and his SMC. Arab activists and organizations have also been instrumental in the promotion of anti-Zionism in European politics after 1967, as I will show. Reflecting these findings and in order to fill this research gap, I have chosen to concentrate on Arab actors when describing the networks of the anti-Zionist movement.

The object of this study is to provide a groundwork of the history of anti-Zionist pro-Arab interest groups in the West, which can then serve as a base for further research. I have chosen to concentrate on these groups' activities in the US, the UK, Germany and Switzerland. There are several reasons for this. The UK as the mandatory power in Palestine was the central fighting ground between Arab and Zionist propagandists for influence before the establishment of Israel. When it became clear that the US would replace the UK as the major international liberal power, this fight moved to the US. Arab nationalists always felt drawn to Germany, which they considered a natural friend of their aspirations. Thus, since the days of World War I, the country featured a small, but politically influential, community of Arabs. After World War II, it was from Germany that Fatah organized its propaganda networks in Europe. Due to its international interconnectedness and its multilingualism, Switzerland and in particular Geneva have played an outsized role in Arab networks since the 1920s when the

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<sup>31</sup> Christina Späti, *Die schweizerische Linke und Israel: Israelbegeisterung, Antizionismus und Antisemitismus zwischen 1967 und 1991*, 1. Aufl, Antisemitismus : Geschichte und Strukturen, Bd. 2 (Essen: Klartext, 2006).

Syrian nationalist Shakib Arslan settled there. France and Italy, two other countries with sizable Arab communities and strong pro-Arab, anti-Zionist traditions, are also often discussed, although they are not the focus of this study. I have selected the topics based on their relevance to the research question and on the accessibility of material. This study does not aspire to be a comprehensive history of pro-Arab interest groups and lobbying in the West. Such a goal would not be achievable given the pioneering character of this work and the absence of previous research. Rather, it is motivated by several research goals, which have already been hinted at above. It seeks to identify the major personalities, structures and tendencies of this movement. It aspires to shed light on the influences this movement had on policymaking, and why it often succeeded and sometimes failed in its goals. It investigates how the movement repeatedly reframed the conflict to appeal to the targeted audience, be it Christian, Western, Middle-Eastern or Muslim. The study investigates the shifting partnerships the anti-Zionist movement formed with other political actors, whatever their political hue. The adopted transnational perspective allows us to recognize parallels and discrepancies between the different countries, and to discern between those approaches which reflected a common strategy and those which were adaptations to the local environment. While I will often discuss the arguments and narratives used by anti-Zionists, my primary focus is on identifying the relevant actors, their backgrounds, motivations and strategies.

As I did not have the luxury of working with a well-known body of sources on an established topic, I had to proceed in my research in an exploratory fashion. Pursuing my leads, I did occasionally find myself at a dead end. More often however, I came across fascinating material, sometimes where least expected. After years of research, I managed to piece together an extensive collection of research material, much of it never studied before, to answer my research questions. The study processes secondary literature and primary material from archives in Switzerland, Germany, France, the UK, the US, and Israel in French, German, English, Hebrew and Arabic. The source material varies in its character including autobiographies, propaganda material, private letters, government correspondence, as well as files from both police and intelligence. Unfortunately, archives in Arab countries remain difficult to access for researchers. It would be helpful if the academic community would work together to change this situation. For as long as this is not the case, Middle East historians have to find detours. Autobiographies play an important part in the historiography of the

contemporary Middle East. Prominent activists like Ahmed Shukeiry, Izzat Tannous, Cecil Hourani and others have left us with accounts of their lives. These works form an important source for this study. Furthermore, the published documents of the Arab League compensated to some extent for the unavailability of Arab archives.

The scope of this study encompasses the Arabo-Muslim world, the UK, the US, Germany and Switzerland during the extensive period from the conquest of Palestine in WWI until the recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people in the mid-1970s. The subject is treated in seven chapters. The first chapter *Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic Propaganda and the Arab-Jewish Conflict before 1939* investigates the role Arab propaganda played in the Arab-Jewish conflict in the first two decades of British rule in Palestine (1917-1939). What was the purpose of this propaganda and who led it? The chapter moreover describes the major propaganda themes of the period, their pedigree and their use. The conjectures of Arab propaganda activity are placed in relation to the key events of the period and analyzed. Early in this period, Arab nationalists became acutely aware of the importance of public opinion in Western states. What techniques and messages did they use to convince Western audiences and decision-makers? A particular focus is laid on the development of propaganda networks during the Arab Revolt (1936-1939), a watershed moment in the mandate period. A professionalization of Arab propaganda, symbolized by Fakhri al-Barudi's Arab National Bureau, was detectable. Outreach towards the West was also intensified during this period. What was the goal of this outreach and how was it achieved? The chapter sheds light on the role of Christian Arabs and pro-Arab sympathizers in this outreach toward Western and Christian audiences. Lastly, it discusses the role of the revisionist powers Italy and Germany in supporting the Arab national movement and its propaganda campaign.

The second chapter *Anti-Zionist Networks in the US before World War II* looks at the groups that formed the core constituents of American anti-Zionism: Protestants of missionary background and Arab-Americans. It asks about the origins of their anti-Zionism and their visions for the Middle East after the Ottoman defeat. The chapter sheds light on the key members and organizations. It further investigates their activities and their efforts to exert influence on US foreign policy. These activities are analyzed within the framework of State Department policy towards Zionism and the Palestine issue, which often acted independently from the US political leadership or even ran

against its wishes. A further section deals with the propaganda campaign of the AHC in the USA. It was motivated by views about the Jewish role in American politics, which will be discussed in the chapter. Arab Christian intellectuals played an important role in advocating Arab national interests and opposing Zionism. Their background and their beliefs will also be highlighted. The configuration of the fight over US public opinion and policy between Zionists and anti-Zionists shifted ground often. It was not only influenced by domestic factors, but also by events abroad, such as the 1929 riots, the Arab Revolt and the rise of National Socialism. This was therefore a tumultuous period in the history of anti-Zionism and Zionism, and one which had a large effect on the history of the Jewish people, the Arabs and Palestine.

The third chapter *The Arab League Propaganda Infrastructure to fight Partition* takes a closer look at the Arab League's and the AHC's propaganda campaign in Western countries after World War II. In anticipation of the approaching showdown with Zionism over the future of Palestine, they build an elaborate propaganda infrastructure in Western countries. The complicated deliberations which preceded its establishment are discussed here. The chapter will show how the British assisted the Arabs in their information campaign in a critical way and investigate their motives. The central pillar of this infrastructure was made up by the Arab Offices, which were established in Jerusalem, London and Washington. Their workings and personnel will be studied. A central focus of the chapter is to explain the rifts among the different Arab factions and states, which hampered the Arab propaganda effort and eventually led to its demise.

The fourth chapter *The Campaign against a Jewish State in the United States* looks at the struggle between anti-Zionists and Zionists in the years 1942-1948 for the dominance of American public opinion and foreign policy regarding the Palestine issue. Both movements realized that the US and not Britain was the place where the future of Palestine would be decided and invested their resources accordingly. The Holocaust and the destruction of Eastern European Jewry changed the configuration of the conflict. However, not everything did change. Thus, the State Department maintained its traditionally critical attitude towards Zionism, which meant that it was often at odds with the President, especially under Truman. The Arab side was strengthened by the establishment of the Arab League, which organized its own campaign in the US. It was joined by the anti-Zionist organizations of Arab-Americans, Protestant and Reform Jewish bodies. The chapter will investigate how these groups worked together in

addition to describing their composition and policies. As such, this chapter disproves narratives which try to portray the pro-Arab faction in the debate over Palestine in this crucial period as insignificant, or even try to ignore them entirely. Rather, I suggest that the claim that the anti-Zionists wielded no influence on US policy, nor that they had tried to do so, was part of the mythmaking of the anti-Zionist movement. In fact, which side would prevail in the contest was unclear until the very end. Lastly, I will analyze the problems the pro-Arab side encountered, and which contributed to its defeat at the UN in November 1947 and the US recognition of Israel in 1948, this despite the investment of heavy resources and the support of the State Department.

The fifth chapter *The German-Arab Friendship between the First World War and the Six-Day War* discusses the history of the concept that there exists a natural friendship between the German people on the one hand and the Arabs and Muslims on the other. It looks at the revival of this concept after World War II. Was it just a slogan, or was there some merit in it? The chapter analyzes the reaction of pro-Arab and far-right circles in Germany to Adenauer's reconciliation policy toward the Jews. In the course of the 1950s, several pro-Arab organizations were established in Germany. Who were their founders and what was their motivation? This chapter takes a deeper look at their ideology, known as Liberation Nationalism. It also looks at the different level of collaboration between the German far-right and Egypt. Moreover, the chapter discusses how the events in Germany influenced the growth of the anti-Zionist scene in Switzerland. It lastly asks about the relationship between far-right Liberation Nationalism and New Left anti-Imperialism.

The sixth chapter *The Arab League Propaganda Infrastructure and its Partners* looks at the period between the establishment of Israel and the Six-Day War. How did the Arab League rebuild and extend its propaganda apparatus in the US after its dissolution following the partition vote of 1947? Which factors pushed it to establish an international network that would eventually cover four continents? It investigates the role of Egypt in the Arab League and its use of propaganda to advance its foreign policy goals. The different strategies of the Arab League offices in their different countries are assessed. Indeed, particularly regarding the collaboration with anti-Semitic activists, it will be shown that the local staff proceeded differently. How were these strategies subject to changing political circumstances? The chapter also evaluates the strategic response of the Arab League to the Arab military defeat in 1967,



when it decided to reframe its political message and target new audiences. Moreover, a case study investigates the collaboration between New Left activists, the Arab League and the PLO in Switzerland during a campaign on behalf of three PFLP terrorists.

The seventh and last chapter *The PLO Network in Europe and Palestine Solidarity* reveals the extent of the Palestinian paramilitary and propaganda networks in Germany and other European countries in the 1960s. It discusses the origins and political aims of these movements and studies the use of these networks for military recruitment and political action. Special attention is paid to the relationship between the GUPS and the rising New Left, which contributed to the latter's turn against Israel. The chapter tells the story of the mushrooming Palestine solidarity movement in Europe and looks at the efforts to unite and coordinate these disparate, and sometimes ideologically mutually hostile, groups. Besides members of the New Left, other traditionally hostile circles to Zionism joined the new anti-Zionist bandwagon. These included the Middle East specialists responsible for foreign policy making in the Middle East, also. The pro-Israeli mood among the European population during the Six-Day War had not only angered the Arab states, but also left European governments worried about their economic investments in the Arab world and raised questions of security. As I will show in this chapter, they therefore tended to accommodate Arab demands. Unknown to the public, they also entered into negotiations with the PLO in the early 1970s, which would eventually result in the official presence of PLO diplomats in many West European countries by the mid-1970s. The local PLO representatives not only engaged in diplomacy, but also did their best to support the local pro-Palestinian movement. The dependence of these organizations on the PLO will be analyzed in this chapter. As I will show, the distinction between propaganda work and terrorism was thereby often blurry. Lastly, the chapter will look at the question of how this mobilization translated in a policy change of the European government with respect to its stance towards the PLO and Palestinian issue.

It is my hope that this study will make it possible to reach a proper assessment of the extent of the anti-Zionism movement and the impact it had on the public and politics of Europe and the US. Consequently, this work may also help to dispel myths of conspiracy theories about all-powerful 'Zionist lobbies', which undergird modern anti-

Semitism, and instead allow for a more balanced view on the Arab-Israeli conflict and its echoes in the West.

# 1 Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic Propaganda and the Arab-Jewish Conflict before 1939

The following chapter analyzes the evolution of the central themes of pan-Islamic and pan-Arab propaganda and the evolution of a sophisticated propaganda infrastructure, which was able to propagate these themes first in the Arabo-Muslim World and later also in the West. It covers the extensive period between the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 and the Alexandria Conference in 1944, which prefigured the establishment of the Arab League, which would become the central antagonist of Israel in the information sphere. This period was formative both for Zionism as well as pan-Arab nationalism pan-Islamism, containing many key events. The British Balfour Declaration in 1917 recognized for the first time the legal claim of the Zionist movement on Palestine, while the 1929 Wailing Wall Riots raised doubts about the sustainability of the Zionist project. The Jerusalem Conference in 1931 marked the Islamization of the conflict, while the formation of the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) on the eve of the Arab Revolt (1936-39) cemented Amin al-Husseini's, the Mufti of Jerusalem, leadership over the Arab opposition to Zionism and led to the first international Arab propaganda campaign extending to the West. This chapter represents an introduction into the foundations of the Arab propaganda effort against Zionism, its central themes and organizational history, all of which is fundamental to the understanding of the history of the post-World War II Arab-Jewish conflict over Palestine.

## 1.1 Pan-Islamism, the 'Jewish War against Islam' and the Crusaders

Propaganda against Zionism in the Arab World started well before the Balfour Declaration in 1917. The conspiracy theory of a Jewish War against Islam was one of its earliest and most powerful manifestations. It even remains popular among contemporary Islamists. As I will show, it has played a central role in Arab national and in pan-Islamic propaganda since the 1920s. Due to its importance, the theory will be analyzed in detail. Rumors of a Jewish takeover of the Islamic sites in Jerusalem first gained traction after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which toppled the authoritarian rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The Young Turks were organized in the

clandestine Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), about which little was known at the time. Its members were mostly of military background, hailing from the Western provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Early on, the rumor spread that Jews and Freemasons were instrumental in the CUP's successful revolution, with the Jews seeking to establish a Jewish state in Palestine after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The theory seems to have been first voiced by the newspaper 'Nahdat al-Arab' in May 1909, which was edited by a certain Syrian Central Committee in Paris. It claimed that the soldiers who had defended the CUP against the counterrevolution on March 31, 1909, were mostly Jews, which was false.<sup>32</sup> It is however possible that the Masonic-Jewish conspiracy theory was already in circulation before its first publication in the Syrian newspaper in May 1909. The allegation that Jewish members of the Young Turks and the founders of the Ottoman Zionist club were on the hit list of the counter revolutionaries, would support this possibility.<sup>33</sup> The CUP's claim of masonic collusion in the revolution was a powerful accusation of the CUP, as freemasonry was widely associated with atheism.<sup>34</sup> There was some truth to the claim of masonic involvement. The CUP did indeed meet in Masonic lodges to organize the 1908 revolution. This however happened for practical reasons. Masonic lodges were under European authority and thus the Ottoman police was barred from entering them.<sup>35</sup> The conspiracy theory of masonic-Jewish collusion was to gain widespread reception in the following years. Among others, it was taken up by British diplomats, pan-Islamic activists and Arab nationalists.

One of the early purveyors of the theory was the British ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Gerard Lowther. In a letter to the Foreign Office in July 1909, ambassador Lowther

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<sup>32</sup> Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (University of California Press, 1976), 82–83.

<sup>33</sup> Mim Ketnâl Öke, "Young Turks, Freemasons, Jews and the Question of Zionism in the Ottoman Empire (1908–1913)," *Studies in Zionism* 7, no. 2 (September 1, 1986): 212–14, doi:10.1080/13531048608575900.

<sup>34</sup> Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I*, 82–83.

<sup>35</sup> Öke, "Young Turks, Freemasons, Jews and the Question of Zionism in the Ottoman Empire (1908–1913)," 209.

spoke of the “*the Jew Committee of Union and Progress*”.<sup>36</sup> In another extensive letter from May 1910, Lowther speculated that the reasons for Jewish-Masonic conspiracy, which he took at face value, lay in the Jewish plan to create a Turkish-Zionist-German alliance to punish Russia for its anti-Semitic actions and by extension also Britain, which had allied itself with Russia since 1908. Moreover, the Jews wished to facilitate Jewish settlement in Palestine and Iraq.<sup>37</sup> To secure their stronghold on Turkish politics, they were even ready to secure sectarian strife. “(…) *the Jew (...) is equally interested in keeping alive the flames of discord between the Turk and his (the Jew's) possible rivals, i.e. the Armenians, Greeks, etc., while it is to be inferred that he would not be averse to the new regime increasing the national indebtedness to the Hebrew financiers.*”<sup>38</sup> In fact, the Young Turks were not enthusiastic about Zionism, as they sought to strengthen the unity of the Empire and therefore were eager to prevent what they considered to be the creation of another ‘minority problem’ in Palestine. In a meeting with the president of the Zionist Organization David Wolffsohn in the summer of 1909, the Young Turks had expressed their opposition to Jewish settlement in Palestine.<sup>39</sup> However, the British had a confirmation bias to believe in the theory. On the one hand, they were wary about German diplomatic and economic expansion in the area, seeing the Jews basically as German agents and fearing that Jewish settlement in Iraq and Palestine would strengthen their plans.<sup>40</sup> In the context of these fears, the Masonic-Jewish conspiracy theory seemed to make sense. On the other hand, the popularity of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories like the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, then widely believed to be authentic, gave credence to the Masonic-Jewish conspiracy. Ambassador Lowther realized the potential usefulness of the Jewish-Masonic conspiracy theory, advising the Foreign Office to relay his report to the British

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<sup>36</sup> Elie Kedourie, “Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 7, no. 1 (1971): 90.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 99–100.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>39</sup> Öke, “Young Turks, Freemasons, Jews and the Question of Zionism in the Ottoman Empire (1908–1913),” 204.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 206–7.

representatives in Egypt, Iran and in particular India to discredit the Committee vis-à-vis the Muslim population and thereby weaken anti-British propaganda. *“For if the prominent Indian Moslems were discreetly given to understand that the Young Turkey movement is seriously influenced by Jewish and atheistic political Freemasonry, the effect would be to counteract any potentially anti-British national Pan-Islamic propaganda carried on by extreme chauvinist Young Turks.”*<sup>41</sup> The theory seems to have been widely believed by the British Foreign Policy establishment, and was also reproduced in an article in the Arab Bulletin on September 26, 1916, which carried the title ‘Notes on Freemasonry in Turkey under the New Regime (1908-1914)’.<sup>42</sup> They were however not the only ones to take up this theory.

Among those who embraced the theory was Rashid Rida, one of the leading thinkers and propagandists of pan-Islamism. Through the pages of his journal, al-Manar, Rida was an influential voice in contemporary Arab political thought. He was also one of the first Arab thinkers to address the issue of Zionism in 1898. His stance to Zionism was subject to considerable change in the following years. Initially, he was dismissive of Arab fears of Zionism and presented Jewish solidarity as a role model for the Arabs. In 1902, he started to warn that the Jews, making no distinction between the Jews and Zionists, were bent on taking over the Holy Land and reestablishing the Jewish kingdom there. The anti-Semitism, which had already appeared in milder forms before, escalated after the Young Turk revolution. In late 1910, Rida claimed that the Jews were instrumental in organizing the French, the Russian and the Young Turk Revolution through the mediation of the Freemasons. It is obvious that he took his cue from the Protocols. In an al-Manar article appearing on December 2, 1910, he further warned that the Jews intended to turn the Al-Aqsa into the Jewish Temple and expel the Arab population from Palestine.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the myth of the Jewish plan to take over al-Aqsa was born, a myth which would take full effect in the 1920s. The British war correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, J.M.N. Jeffries, while travelling in the Middle East in the early 1920s, reported an interesting experience he had with one of the early

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<sup>41</sup> Kedourie, “Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews,” 103.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>43</sup> Uriya Shavit, “Zionism as Told by Rashid Rida,” *Journal of Israeli History* 34, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 26–30.

propagandists of the Islamic cause in Damascus: “I learned how every pilgrim of any consequence to Mecca had our policy exposed to him. I came to know, in a sparring-partner sort of way, one of the Moslem sheiks chiefly engaged in this. He had just come from Mecca. (...) He was responsible, I had little doubt, for the leaflets distributed to Mecca pilgrims which bore a representation of the Mosque of Omar with either the cross or a Jewish symbol (I forget which) placed at its summit, supposedly, of course, by the British authorities in Jerusalem.”<sup>44</sup> The picture Jeffries described had been painted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by a Yeshiva, a religious Jewish establishment, for fundraising and decorative purposes. Thus, it bore no connection to the Zionist movement or the British government, nor of course did it express any intent to take over the Haram al-Sharif, the complex of Muslim holy sites on the Temple Mount. Nevertheless, Arab and Islamic propagandists have used it as proof since the 1920s of alleged Jewish plans to take over the Al-Aqsa.<sup>45</sup> In their view, Jewish state-building in Palestine during the 1920s seemed to confirm the correctness of the ‘Jewish War against Islam’ theme.

The Western Wall, also called the Wailing Wall, in Jerusalem became the central battlefield against this supposed Jewish conspiracy. After the establishment of British rule over Palestine, the Jews sought to remove the discriminatory restrictions on their worshipping at the Wailing Wall, which had been imposed by the Ottoman authorities. The Ottomans had prohibited the use of religious appurtenances at the Wall, like scrolls or dividing screens, but had tolerated them tacitly. They also sought to gain authority over the site. This was not an entirely new development. In 1887, Jewish figures had already received the acquiescence of local Ottoman officials, among them the local Mufti and grandfather of Amin al-Husseini, to acquire the ground of the Wailing Wall, which belong to the Waqf. They withdrew the plan however because of the local Jews’ fear that this might negatively affect the Arabs. After the war, these plans were revived. Moreover, after the start of repairs at the Haram al-Sharif above the Wailing Wall, repairs which the Jews regarded as desecration, the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem

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<sup>44</sup> Joseph Mary Nagle Jeffries, *Front Everywhere* (Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1935), 279–80.

<sup>45</sup> Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (Frank Cass Publishers, 1996), 262.

asked the British to hand over control of the site. The Muslim leadership portrayed these steps as a prelude to efforts to take over the Haram al-Sharif and opposed all steps for a change favorable to the Jews. The British authorities supported the SMC in their strict understanding of the Ottoman directives, which had in fact not been applied previously. On Pesach 1922, the SMC even directly hindered Jews from bringing religious appurtenances to the Wailing Wall, incidents which would repeat themselves in the following years.<sup>46</sup> The Muslim religious leadership failed to interpret Jewish demands in their proper context, as the justified empowerment of the Jewish community following Ottoman discrimination, but instead saw them as a consequence of feared Jewish efforts to take over the entirety of the country and uproot the traditional order of Muslim supremacy.

Whether the SMC's agitation against any change in the status of the Wailing Wall was initially due to real apprehensions, the claim that the Muslim holy sites were in danger quickly turned into a powerful theme of propaganda detached from reality. The theme allowed the Arab leadership in Palestine to gain solidarity in the wider Arab-Muslim world and internationalize the conflict. The supposedly threatened Islamic holy places in Jerusalem provided an excellent rallying point for the propagation of pan-Islamic solidarity. Moreover, they became a symbol of both the national and the religious struggle of the Arab people in Palestine. This should not be too surprising. Unlike other forms of nationalisms evolving during the same period in Egypt or Lebanon, there was no clear separation between Arab nationalism and Islam in Palestine. This was also reflected in the SMC's use of mixed terminology, speaking for instance of "national Islamic" instead of "national Palestinian" when describing local institutions. Moreover, the SMC was strongly influenced by the neo-Salafi movement in Egypt, where the clear majority of Palestinians seeking higher religious education studied. Uri Kupferschmidt has theorized that religious penetration of Arab nationalism in Palestine may also be related to the special challenge of Zionism, which connected to the Jewish past and the sanctity of the country that they called Eretz Israel. A strictly secular Arab nationalism would also have meant an embracement of this Jewish past.<sup>47</sup> The Arab

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 258–60.

<sup>47</sup> Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam Under the British Mandate for Palestine* (BRILL, 1987), 224.



nationalist movement was not ready to do this. Instead, it proceeded to Islamize and internationalize the conflict. The Fourth Palestinian Congress, which was held in Jerusalem in June of 1921, discussed the idea of dispatching delegations to the Middle East to propagandize their struggle and raise money. In June 1922, the first such delegation departed for Mecca, consisting of Abd al-Kadir Muzaffer, Rafiq Tammimi and Amin Nurallah. During a stay in Egypt, they produced a leaflet designed to call attention to the supposed threat, and which included a print of the by that time well-known picture of the Star of David topping the mosque. After meetings with the religious leadership of the country and Rashid Rida, they published a Fatwa to call for the defense of Al-Aqsa. In Mecca, the delegation took part in the pan-Arab al-Jazirah congress, again raising this issue and resulting in the establishment of 'Association for Muslim Solidarity' to defend Al-Aqsa on August 9, 1922. In early 1923, Kamel al-Budeiri campaigned among the Transjordan Bedouins using the yeshiva picture.<sup>48</sup> To a significant degree, the spreading of the 'Jewish War against Islam' theme in the first half of the 1920s was therefore the consequence of a conscious propaganda campaign.

Amin al-Husseini, the leader of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC), pursued a strategy of deliberately enhancing the status of the Islamic sites in Jerusalem in the Muslim world, motivated by both political expediency and his personal ambition to be recognized as a Muslim leader.<sup>49</sup> In agreement with British authorities, the SMC issued an appeal to the Muslim World lamenting Haram al-Sharif's derelict state. The appeal emphasized the site's importance and called for donations to renovate it, but did not include any claims about possible threats, as these would not have received British agreement.<sup>50</sup> Between 1923 and 1924, the SMC then sent a total of six delegations out into the wider Muslim world to fundraise.<sup>51</sup> The first delegation travelled to Egypt and Mecca in July 1923, and consisted of Amin al-Husseini, Mohammed Murad, the

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<sup>48</sup> Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 263–65.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>50</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 238.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 188.

Mufti of Haifa, and Ibrahim Ansari. The British authorities in Egypt however reported that the delegation was less concerned with fundraising than with spreading nationalist propaganda and promoting “*the notoriously untrue statement that the Haran esh Sherif [sic] in Jerusalem was being placed under the control of the Jews.*”<sup>52</sup> In Cairo, Husseini’s delegation established a so-called Association for the Defense of the Holy Places. In line with the majority of the pan-Islamic movement, it was vociferously anti-British and pro-Turkish. After the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, it sent a congratulatory letter to the Turkish newspaper *Tevhid Efkiar* on July 30, 1923. The letter expressed the hope that the Turkish nation would return as the “*Standardbearer of Islam, and will encompass the union of Moslems and the salvation of the East,*” and serve as a protector to the Islamic holy places.<sup>53</sup> Besides the spread of propaganda, the delegation also carried a political message to King Hussein in Mecca. They planned to inform him of three secret decisions taken by only the Moslem delegates at the 6<sup>th</sup> Arab Congress, which had taken place from June 16-20 in Palestine, and in which the proposal of a political union of Palestine and Syria under the sovereignty of Turkey had been met with favor. Moreover, they sought to ask Hussein to change his stance vis-à-vis the British, a stance which the Arab nationalists deemed to be too friendly.<sup>54</sup> A second delegation, which included Jamal Husseini and which enjoyed the support of the British authorities, set sail for India.<sup>55</sup> With the Turkish abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the hopes of the Pan-Islamists, including Amin al-Husseini, to restore Turkish authority over the Islamic sites in Jerusalem and remove the supposed Jewish danger, were dashed.

Besides al-Husseini’s SMC, the main purveyors of the international pro-Palestinian propaganda effort in the Arab world during the 1920s were individual activists, such as Mohammed Ali al-Taher or Rashid Rida in Egypt and Shakib Arslan in Switzerland. In

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<sup>52</sup> “Foreign Office to HM Consul in Jeddah on the Arrival of a Palestinian Delegation in Cairo” September 13, 1923, FO 371/9016.

<sup>53</sup> “Foreign Office Minute” September 7, 1923, FO 371/9016.

<sup>54</sup> “Reports on the Arab Nationalist Movement” September 7, 1923, FO 371/9016.

<sup>55</sup> Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 205–6.

the late 1920s, the pan-Islamic and neo-Salafi associations, which first emerged in Egypt and quickly expanded to Palestine, assumed an important role in the propaganda and internationalization effort of the Arab cause in Palestine. Leading associations among them were the Young Men's Muslim Association (Arab. *Jamiyat al-Shubban al-Muslimim*) founded in 1927 and the Muslim Brotherhood (Arab. *Jamiyat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimim*) founded in 1928 by one of the YMMA's earliest supporters, Hassan al-Banna.<sup>56</sup> In its first years, the YMMA overshadowed the currently much better-known Muslim Brotherhood in activity and influence. The YMMA's board of directors consisted of twelve members, including prominent representatives of the Al Azhar University, the press and the Ministry of Education. Abd al-Hamid Said, a famous nationalist and Egyptian MP, served as the YMMA's president in the first years of its existence. The leading intellectual figure however seems to have been Yahya Bey Ahmad Dardiri, who had degrees in law and political science from the University of Geneva.<sup>57</sup> An article published in 1929 in the first number of the magazine published by the organization conveys a comprehensive impression of the organization's worldview and aims, which have been described as neo-Salafi. According to Dardiri, the Muslim world was suffering from moral anarchy due to three reasons: Ignorance, the adoption of bad facets of Western civilization, and the negligence of the elite. Only a return to the Koran, he stipulated, could inspire a moral revival that would be a condition for a revival in other fields as well.<sup>58</sup> However, despite their neo-Salafi ideology, groups like the YMMA and the Muslim Brotherhood were not entirely inimical to innovation. This was evidenced by their adoption of the Palestinian cause, which was grounded both in nationalism and in Islam.

In contrast to its propaganda campaign abroad, the SMC pursued its propaganda in Palestine with greater restraint. Thus, the call for the defense of Al-Aqsa did not affect the country until 1928. The public festivities held on the occasion of completion of the

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<sup>56</sup> Richard Paul Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, vol. 9, Middle Eastern Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 7–8.

<sup>57</sup> Georg Kampffmeyer, "Egypt and Western Asia," in *Whither Islam*, ed. H. A. R. (Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen) Gibb, 1932, 105–6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 114–15.

renovations of the Islamic holy sites in August 1928 proved the success of the internationalization strategy. The event was attended by many international guests, including Abdullah I of Jordan and Abd al-Hamid Said, the president of the Islamist YMMA in Egypt.<sup>59</sup> One year later, the conflict erupted again. In mid-August 1929, the youth group of the Revisionist Zionists demonstrated at the Western Wall. The action was designed to underscore the Jewish claim on the Western Wall.<sup>60</sup> A week after the events, Arab demonstrators started a nation-wide riot, which culminated in the massacres of the Jews in Hebron and Safed in late August 1929. According to the Palestinian journalist Emil Ghourey who became Amin al-Husseini's chief propagandist in the late 1930s, it was a "*a day of brilliance and glory in the annals of Palestinian-Arab history. This is a day of honour, splendour and sacrifice. We attacked Western conquest and the Mandate and the Zionists upon our land. The Jews had coveted our endowments and yearned to take over our holy places. In our silence they had seen a sign of weakness, therefore there was no more room in our hearts for patience or peace; no sooner had the Jews begun marching along this shameful road than the Arabs stood up, checked the oppression, and sacrificed their pure and noble souls on the sacred altar of nationalism.*"<sup>61</sup> The British commission which investigated the events questioned Muslim representatives from several countries, a fact which further underscores that the status of the religious sites in Jerusalem had become a question of international concern.<sup>62</sup> One of the groups which showed particular zeal with regard to the issue was the YMMA, one of the first internationalist Islamist groups. It sent several letters to the British authorities and to the League of Nations to protest Jewish claims to the Wailing Wall.<sup>63</sup> The first such letter stated: "*Every Moslem in whatever part of the earth regards himself as a warrior who stands up together with the Moslems of Palestine to defend a pledge put into their hands. Moslems will never allow Zionists*

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<sup>59</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 188.

<sup>60</sup> Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 269.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>62</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 188–89.

<sup>63</sup> Kampffmeyer, "Egypt and Western Asia," 121–23.

*to make of a site sacred to them a centre of their national propaganda, as long as there is left on the surface of the earth one Moslem, and as long as there is living blood pulsing in the veins of that Moslem.*<sup>64</sup> In the understanding of the pan-Islamists like those of the YMMA, the fight against Zionism had thus assumed the trappings of a religious war.

This interpretation of the events was further developed by international propaganda. During the Wailing Wall riots in 1929, the Egyptian branches of the YMMA echoed the Mufti's propaganda in Palestine, portraying the clashes as a religious struggle. The most popular allegation claimed that the Zionists were intent on destroying the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem and re-erecting their Temple. Moreover, the propaganda cited hadiths to prove Islam's eternal enmity to the Jews. The major Egyptian newspapers published calls for the defense of Al-Aqsa. Paradoxically, the Jews were accused of seeking to reestablish their ancient kingdom and of spreading Bolshevism at the same time.<sup>65</sup> In al-Manar, Rida began speaking of a "*War on Islam*" by the British and the Jews, crediting the latter with intent to destroy the three holiest places of Islam.<sup>66</sup> In parallel, the SMC emphasized the Muslim character of Palestine by declaring its sanctity for Islam. This coincided with the now frequent use of the term 'holy country' by Muslims, which was probably influenced by the Jewish and Christian designation for the Land of Israel. SMC publications alleged that Zionism sought to eradicate Islam from Palestine.<sup>67</sup> Common holidays like Balfour Day on November 2 provided a further vessel to push for the internationalization of the Palestinian cause. On this day, political protests were held in many places in the Arab and Muslim world, often erupting into violence against the local Jewish communities.

Besides the 'Jewish War against Islam', there was another theme which helped unite pan-Islamists and Arab Arabists against a common danger and strengthened their

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Mayer, *Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1945* (Berlin: K. Schwarz Verlag, 1982), 15–17.

<sup>66</sup> Shavit, "Zionism as Told by Rashid Rida," 37.

<sup>67</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 240–42.

identity. This was a fear that the British would use the conquest of Palestine to spread disunity among its population and convert its Muslims to Christianity. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) quickly became the focal point of those fears because it enjoyed the support of the mandate government in Palestine. Regardless of their religion, public servants joined the association to socialize with their colleagues and advance their careers. Some leading functionaries of the mandate government were also active in the YMCA.<sup>68</sup> This begged an explanation. The country's most read Arabic newspaper '*Filastin*', which was edited by the Christian Arab Issa al-Issa, contended that the British supported the YMCA in order to spread sectarian strife between the Arab Christians and Muslims.<sup>69</sup> The Meeting of the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem in March/April 1928, during which amongst other things the mission towards Muslims was also discussed, provided additional fodder.<sup>70</sup> The most strident critiques of the conference appeared in the newspaper '*al-Jamia al-Arabiya*', and formed part of a veritable press campaign. Its editor was Munif al-Husseini, a supporter of the Husseini faction in Palestinian politics, who also happened to be Amin al-Husseini's nephew. While the Christian conference was still sojourning in Jerusalem, he published a scathing attack on it on March 22, 1928. The article claimed that the conference was in fact part of a wider conspiracy: "*These conventions are only one of the forms in which colonial western countries are taking over the East. Their goal is not only to attack Islam, rather to disseminate missionary activities and to ignite sectarian hatred in Palestine between Muslims and Christians, thus putting an end on their common national interest, founded on Muslim-Christian brotherhood, and paving the way for*

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<sup>68</sup> Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (IB Tauris, 2006), 47; Mustafa Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39: Writing Up a Storm* (Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 39.

<sup>69</sup> Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39*, 39.

<sup>70</sup> For the proceedings of the conference, see Jan van Lin, *Shaking the Fundamentals: Religious Plurality and Ecumenical Movement* (Rodopi, 2002), 64–100.

*foreign takeover of the Land.*<sup>71</sup> The struggle against Western Christian influence soon revealed sectarian tensions within the Arab national movement. Thus, in 1930, the YMMA tried to introduce a new national holiday to remember the Muslim victory at Hittin in 1187 against a crusader army, a move which triggered heavy criticism in the Christian Arab press.<sup>72</sup> After all, there was always an implicit threat in the call to Muslim-Christian brotherhood. Those native Christians, who, like the Armenians, were not necessarily Arab, who fraternized with their Western coreligionists instead of the Arab Muslims, were viewed as complicit in the Western conquest of the region and therefore traitors.

The media campaign against missionary activities created a fertile climate for the growth of political Islam in Palestine. As a response to the Christian conference in Jerusalem, activists held a Congress of Islamic Clubs in Jaffa in April 1928, which ended with the establishment of the Palestinian branch of the YMMA. Already six months later, the organization counted ten local chapters in Palestine. As mentioned above, its ideology was a blend of Salafi Islam and nationalism, in which Islam was viewed as necessary to preserve the Arab Nation and its culture.<sup>73</sup> How can this success of Salafi Islam in Palestine be explained? Among other factors, like geographic proximity, Palestine was very receptive to Salafi ideology due to the close connections of its Ulema to Egypt, where most of them had received their higher education.<sup>74</sup> The SMC also used the outcry over missionary activity to further the internationalization of the Palestinian cause. In late April 1928, Amin al-Husseini sent a letter and several copies of the newspaper *al-Jamia al-Arabiya* to Maulana Shaukat Ali, the leader of the Khilafat Movement in India, to warn him about the activities of the Christian missionaries in Palestine. Moreover, he urged Shaukat Ali to organize a campaign in the leading Indian newspapers to denounce the mandate governments' alleged plans to convert the Muslims, "*annihilate Islam and destroy the reputation of*

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<sup>71</sup> Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39*, 39–40.

<sup>72</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 236.

<sup>73</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 56–57.

<sup>74</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 224.

*its holy Prophet*” via their proxy, the missionaries.<sup>75</sup> Due to its sizable Muslim population, India ranked high in the strategic calculations of the Palestinian leadership. By winning them over, pressure could be exerted on the British mandate government. Groups like the YMMA stressed the importance of Islamic solidarity to confront Western rule over Muslim communities. Besides Palestine, the French and Italian presence in North Africa were at the center of their attention. A congress held in 1930 was dedicated to the issue, discussing fifteen propositions to promote Islamic solidarity. The projects included the establishment of an Islamic daily newspaper. The resolutions adopted at the congress included the work for the resurrection of the caliphate and the founding of a League of Islamic Nations. Another concern was the fight against missionary activity and the Islamic education of children. The congress urged the government to introduce laws restricting the freedom of thought by banning the defamation of religion, meaning all criticism of Islam.<sup>76</sup> The Islamic Conference in Jerusalem in 1931, which was organized under the auspices of Amin al-Husseini, was another milestone in the creation of a pan-Islamic community of solidarity. Shakib Arslan, the head of the Syro-Palestinian delegation in Geneva and a gifted networker and propagandist of the Arab cause, hailed it as the “*the spiritual and social parliament of Islam*.”<sup>77</sup> Despite such high hopes, most of the projects of the congress, such as the establishment of an Islamic university in Jerusalem, ended in failure.<sup>78</sup>

The next pan-Islamic conference would take place in Geneva and target the continent’s growing Muslim communities. Shakib Arslan headed the preparatory committee for the European Muslim Congress of 1935, while the Persian Zya al-Din Tabatabai worked as its General Secretary. Tabatabai had served for the Jerusalem Congress of 1931 in the same function, thus forming a link between the two events. The congress was

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<sup>75</sup> Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, “Précis of Censored Letter from Mohammed Amin Al-Husseini to Shaukat Ali” April 22, 1928, TNA CO 733/173/3.

<sup>76</sup> Kampffmeyer, “Egypt and Western Asia,” 130–35.

<sup>77</sup> William L. Cleveland, *Islam against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism*, vol. no. 10, Modern Middle East Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 80.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



not only to rally representatives of the Muslim communities in Europe, but also the continent's Muslim political emigrants.<sup>79</sup> The organizing committee consisted of old acquaintances of Arslan, including his collaborator Ihsan Jabiri, Ehsan Hakky, and Zaki Kiram from Berlin and Ali Zaki from Vienna.<sup>80</sup> Ehsan Hakky, who solicited the authorization for the event from the police, presented it as a networking event for European Muslims, where they could also learn to acquire *"the new scientific theories, which are not in contradiction with the truth, (...) in the manner of preventing a caricature of modern civilization."*<sup>81</sup> This had been the original aim of the Salafi movement: To reconcile Islam with modernity. Hakky moreover promised the Swiss authorities that the congress would be apolitical in nature and not meddle into politics, a necessary precondition for its legality.<sup>82</sup> However, the issue of Palestine occupied center stage in its proceedings. The organizers escaped the predicament by claiming that in contrast to the Jews and Great Britain, which considered Palestine a political issue, it *"is a strictly religious one from the Muslim point of view."*<sup>83</sup> Thus, they again underlined that the conflict over Palestine was religious in nature.

Pan-Islamism had a number of Western admirers. Among those was the German orientalist Georg Kampffmeyer, the editor of the scholarly journal *Die Welt des Islam*, who was sympathetic to the neo-Salafi project of the YMMA. He was as skeptical as the Islamists about the allegedly corrosive influence of the West on Egypt's culture and society. In his opinion, groups like the YMMA indicated that the Egyptians were successful in preserving their heritage: *"During the last 20 years, there has been a danger that the Egyptians might lose, by contact with Western civilization, their individuality, might part with their own past, with religion and morals, and surrender themselves to what is bad in Western civilization without the possibility of taking in what*

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<sup>79</sup> Martin Seth Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 1st Edition edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 144–45.

<sup>80</sup> "Declaration of Ehsan Sami Ismail Hakky to the Police" March 26, 1935, CHBAR E2001D#1000/1552#8771\*.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 150–51.

*is good in it. The danger seems to have been overcome. National feeling has grown, has deepened and become almost general. With it has grown the understanding of the real needs of the Nation and the East. There is, in fact, a widespread feeling of which the activity of the Y.M.M.A. is a strong and organized expression.*"<sup>84</sup> Kampffmeyer believed that the revival of Islam was in the interest of Christianity, as it helped stem the rise of secularism, and all efforts to convert Muslims were in fact counterproductive.<sup>85</sup> Kampffmeyer was no outlier. Many Western scholars in the Arab world tended to look with sympathy on the rising nationalism in the region and identified with its views, including those towards Zionism, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

## 1.2 The Arab Revolt, the AHC and Propaganda in Britain

The Arab Revolt in Palestine from 1936-1939 was a watershed moment in the history of Mandatory Palestine. It convinced both the Zionists and the British that a conciliation between Jewish and Arab interests in Palestine was no longer achievable and thus prefigured partition, which was first proposed by the Peel Commission in 1937. The revolt began in April 1936 with a general strike directed against the British mandate government and the Yishuv. On April 25, 1936, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) under the leadership of Mufti Amin al-Husseini was established to coordinate the strike activities. The AHC demanded the cessation of Jewish emigration, the end of land sales to Jews and the establishment of a constitutional government. The cessation of the strikes in October marked the end of the first phase of the revolt. The second, more violent phase of the revolt started in September 1937. It was marked by large scale irregular fighting between the British forces and Arab guerilla bands and would last until 1939.<sup>86</sup> The militarization of the conflict was accompanied by a professional effort by the Arab leadership to internationalize the conflict via propaganda and diplomacy. While the propaganda was still largely concentrated on the Arab-Islamic world,

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<sup>84</sup> Kampffmeyer, "Egypt and Western Asia," 153–54.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 162–65.

<sup>86</sup> Jacob Norris, "Repression and Rebellion: Britain's Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936–39," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 26–27.

significant investments were made to influence Western public opinion and decision-making circles, in particular in Britain and the US.

This was not an entirely new development. The Arab Executive had realized the necessity of exerting some influence on the mandate administration via the Britain government early on. To that end, it decided to dispatch a delegation to London in March 1921. A British committee in support of the Arabs in Palestine encouraged this decision. The committee counted many prominent personalities, the politicians Lord Sydenham and Lord Lemington among others.<sup>87</sup> According to the prominent Syrian pan-Arab propagandist Fakhri al-Barudi, Lord Northcliffe, the publisher of the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, who had toured Palestine in 1922, had also advised the Arabs during his stay to invest more in propaganda in order to make their case heard: *“Lord Northcliffe, owner of the newspaper ‘The Times’, during his stay in Palestine, said to a group of Palestinians who visited him: ‘You are complaining here and nobody in England hears you because you practice no propaganda there. The English opinion might be more interested in the result of a soccer match than in the Palestinian question.’”*<sup>88</sup> From the beginning, the Arabs could thus count on a fine collection of dedicated pro-Arab activists. During its long stay in Britain, the Arab Executive delegation also enjoyed support from the right-wing and anti-Semitic press. This included the *Morning Post*, the newspaper which had become notorious for its publication of the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’. Its editorial line pressed for a British withdrawal from the Middle East. The most famous pro-Arab British journalist was Joseph Jeffries. Jeffries had worked as a war correspondent for the *Daily Mail* newspaper during World War I and had visited Palestine several times. His criticism of Zionism was evidently tinged by anti-Semitism. In the pages of the *Daily Mail*, he inveighed against the financial schemes and atheism of the *“Bolsheviks”* and *“Judeo-*

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<sup>87</sup> Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 137.

<sup>88</sup> Centre des hautes études sur l’Afrique et l’Asie moderne, “Notes sur le bureau national Arabe de recherches et d’informations de Damas” 1938, 4, ANF 20000002/17.

*Slavs*”, who had secured Palestine by duping the British.<sup>89</sup> Jeffries continued to provide substantial support for the Arab Cause in Britain. In 1923, he published the first excerpts of the MacMahon-Hussein correspondence to support Arab demands regarding Palestine.<sup>90</sup> Between 1921 and 1939, several emissaries and six official delegations visited London, half of them before 1929. Then, with the flaring up of the Arab-Jewish conflict after the Wailing Wall riots in 1929, the diplomatic effort resumed. A fourth and a fifth diplomatic mission were dispatched in 1930 and in 1936. The last official Arab-Palestinian delegation made the journey to the London Conference in 1939. In 1930, an SMC delegation including Shakib Arslan was also sent to the US to lobby with the government and the Arab-American community – with limited success.<sup>91</sup> In the 1930s, the Arabs moved to establish permanent diplomatic structures in the British capital so that they could communicate directly with the British government and public. The first such plans to permanently staff an Arab center in London had in fact

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<sup>89</sup> David Cesarani, “Anti-Zionist Politics and Political Antisemitism in Britain, 1920–1924,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 23, no. 1 (1989): 29–35.

<sup>90</sup> Joseph Mary Nagle Jeffries, *The Palestine Deception* (Daily mail, 1923).

<sup>91</sup> “Arabs Sending Delegations to England and America,” *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, January 3, 1930, <http://www.jta.org/1930/01/03/archive/arabs-sending-delegations-to-england-and-america>; “Arab-Christian Quits American Delegation,” *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, February 21, 1930, <http://www.jta.org/1930/02/21/archive/arab-christian-quits-american-delegation>; “Urge Arabs Here to Buy Palestine Lands,” *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, June 4, 1930, <http://www.jta.org/1930/06/04/archive/urge-arabs-here-to-buy-palestine-lands>; “Arab Delegation to U.S. Made Financial Failure, Bendak Says,” *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, September 28, 1930, <http://www.jta.org/1930/09/28/archive/arab-delegation-to-u-s-made-financial-failure-bendak-says>; Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 202; Naomi Wiener Cohen, *The Year After the Riots: American Responses to the Palestine Crisis of 1929-30* (Wayne State University Press, 1988), 120.

already been made in 1923, but never materialized.<sup>92</sup> These plans would eventually be realized in the 1930s.

Since 1934, Amin al-Husseini had entertained the idea of opening a propaganda mission in London, but these plans were only to be realized after the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936.<sup>93</sup> Thus, two months into the revolt, on June 10, 1936, an AHC delegation consisting of Jamal Husseini, Izzat Tannous and Shibly Jamal was dispatched to London. Their primary goal was to try to bring Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore around to their viewpoints. Ormsby-Gore had previously refused to give in to the AHC demands and was therefore accused of pro-Zionist leanings.<sup>94</sup> While the 1936 delegation to Britain did not achieve much progress on the diplomatic front, it was a public relations success. Izzat Tannous was instrumental in cultivating the pro-Arab network in the country, meeting up with several prominent British sympathizers of Arab nationalism. The list included such eminent figures as S.F. Newcombe, a former Arabist in the British Army who had been instrumental in the Arab Revolt and was one of T.E. Lawrence's closest friends and collaborators; Joseph Jeffries; the conservative MP, Clifton Brown; and the travel author, H.V. Morton.<sup>95</sup> The latter was a highly influential writer whose book about his travels in the Middle East was distributed to British servicemen stationed in the region during WW II. It was later revealed that he harbored anti-Semitic convictions and had some sympathies with the ideology of National Socialism.<sup>96</sup> MP Clifton Brown facilitated the AHC delegation's being introduced to sympathetic MPs, many of whom would later form the pro-Arab

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<sup>92</sup> Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement*, vol. 11 (Cornell University Press, 1979), 171.

<sup>93</sup> Miller, *Divided against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948*, 11:10.

<sup>94</sup> Izzat Tannous, *The Palestinians: A Detailed Documented Eyewitness History of Palestine Under British Mandate* (New York, N.Y: I.G.T. Company, 1988), 176–79.

<sup>95</sup> Kerry Webber, "S.F. Newcombe - A Short Biography," *In the Shadow of the Crescent*, August 18, 2015, <http://shadowofthecrescent.blogspot.com.es/p/sf-newcombe-short-biography.html>; Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 181–82.

<sup>96</sup> Michael Bartholomew, *In Search of H. V. Morton* (London: Methuen, 2006).

Parliamentary Committee in the House of Commons.<sup>97</sup> Lord Winterton, a friend of the Hashemite Jordanian King Faisal, chaired the group, which counted about sixty MPs at its apogee, all of them conservatives.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, it was decided to establish a permanent base for pro-Arab propaganda in the UK at H.V. Morton's house. This base was initially known as the Palestine Information Centre (PIC) and was later renamed Arab Centre. The leadership of the new center was shared by Morton, S.F. Newcombe, Mrs. Stewart Erskine, Mrs. Frances Newton--the daughter of a missionary and a fervent anti-Zionist herself--as well as Musa al-Husseini. During their stay, the delegation also authored an eleven page pro-Arab pamphlet with the title 'The Palestine Case – Statement by the Palestine Arab Delegation', which was the first anti-Zionist propaganda publication in Britain authored by an Arab body.<sup>99</sup> However, the body did not retain its independence for long. Acting as the honorary secretary of the Arab Centre, Frances Newton met the Mufti in 1937, and offered to submit the pro-Arab Centre directly to him and the AHC. The Mufti agreed and dispatched his delegates Emil Ghoury and Izzat Tannous to London.<sup>100</sup> The good spirit of the English pro-Arab sympathizers amazed the latter: *"They acted as if the Arab Palestine case was their own, exerting honest keen effort which lasted three consecutive years only to be interrupted by the second catastrophe of the century, the Second World War."*<sup>101</sup> The enthusiasm of the foreign pro-Arab activists was in no way inferior to that of the AHC functionaries.

When Izzat Tannous arrived in London, he held a meeting with the staff of the Arab Centre. It was decided to start the publication of a weekly bulletin, *The Arab Center Bulletin*, which was to be distributed to politicians, the media and various organizations, starting with a circulation of 5'000.<sup>102</sup> The pamphlets the Arab Centre produced during

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<sup>97</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 181–82.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 201–2.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 183–87.

<sup>100</sup> Miller, "More Sinned Against than Sinning? The Case of the Arab Office, Washington, 1945–1948," 12.

<sup>101</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 202.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

the Arab Revolt in Palestine caused controversy. Additionally, in 1937 and 1938, the Centre published two booklets by Frances Newton, titled 'Punitive Measures in Palestine' and 'Searchlight on Palestine', which accused the British of acting excessively and arbitrarily in their suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine. British officials invested great effort to prove the mendacity of these accusations. The latter booklet also featured the picture of a torn-up Coran, allegedly desecrated by the British, although the event was not personally witnessed by Newton. This had British officials worried that it may be used to stoke anti-British sentiment among Muslims. Archibald Wavell, then General Officer Commanding of the British forces in Palestine, rejected the veracity of this report in a letter to the Colonial Office: "*The torn Koran is a regular feature of such propaganda, and is simply manufactured evidence to provoke religious feeling. I am absolutely certain that no Koran has at any time been torn or defaced during a search by troops.*"<sup>103</sup> Material produced by the Arab Centre was not only directed at the British public, but also distributed in Arab and Muslim countries. Warnings in this regard reached British officials from Egypt,<sup>104</sup> Damascus,<sup>105</sup> and other countries, leaving British officials fearing that the booklets would "*fan anti-British propaganda in 35 Arab countries*".<sup>106</sup> The fact that anti-British propaganda was being spread from England must have been a new experience.

The PIC not only consorted within respectable circles, but also found support amongst the British extreme right, which it reciprocated. Thus, the PIC announced its events in the fascist press and members of the AHC and Amin al-Husseini's Palestine Arab Party, such as Emil Ghoury and Izzat Tannous, published in it. In these instances, Arab propagandists revealed their extreme anti-Semitism, which they otherwise often sought to hide from Western audiences. In the late thirties, PIC member George

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<sup>103</sup> Archibald Wavell, "Letter from Archibald Wavell," March 31, 1938, TNA CO 733/370/8.

<sup>104</sup> "Letter to H.F. Downie," August 22, 1938, TNA CO 733/370/8.

<sup>105</sup> Gilbert MacKereth, "Letter from British Consulate in Damascus to High Commissioner," June 7, 1938, TNA CO 733/370/8.

<sup>106</sup> Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 206.

Mansur lectured in front of the anti-Semitic Nordic League, stating that “*extermination is the only solution to the Jew problem in Palestine and he could think of no better one for this country.*”<sup>107</sup> Mansur also maintained contact with Robert Gordon-Canning, an advocate of an alliance between Fascism and Islam.<sup>108</sup> Robert Gordon-Canning was a longtime Islamo- and Arabophile. Gordon-Canning had first discovered his enthusiasm for Islam during the Rif War, when he served as the honorary president for the Committee for the Defence of the Muslim Rif. His admiration for Islam sprang from his disaffection with the West and Christianity. In an article in 1924 in the *Islamic Review*, a journal run by the Ahmadiyya sect, he contrasted the virtues of Islam with the corrupted and materialist West. In the following years, he also voiced his opposition to Zionism using anti-Jewish rhetoric. Gordon-Canning arrived in Palestine in early November 1929, where he was hosted by the Mufti and other Arab Executive Committee functionaries. He was probably responding to an initiative by the Arab Executive’s Awni Abdel Hadi, who sought to recruit a pro-Arab advocate to participate in the inquiry into the anti-Jewish pogroms, which had shaken Palestine in August 1929. Gordon-Canning toured the country, visiting dignitaries and openly railing against Zionism. In a speech in Haifa, he compared the Arab struggle against Zionism to Mohammed’s jihad against the polytheists. After his return, he tried to act as an unofficial spokesman for the Mufti vis-à-vis the Colonial Office, but failed to be recognized by it in that role.<sup>109</sup> Gordon-Canning joined the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in 1934, and was responsible for the BUF’s international relations, particularly with Germany and Italy. But he also maintained contact with Shakib Arslan in Geneva. A column on foreign affairs by Gordon-Canning regularly appeared in the BUF’s central organ, *Action*. In his function, he possessed a certain influence on shaping the BUF’s stance on international affairs and especially Palestine. His views were largely

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<sup>107</sup> Graham Macklin, “A Fascist ‘Jihad’: Captain Robert Gordon-Canning, British Fascist Antisemitism and Islam,” *Holocaust Studies* 15, no. 1–2 (June 1, 2009): 88–89, doi:10.1080/17504902.2009.11087231.

<sup>108</sup> Graham Macklin, “A Fascist ‘Jihad’: Captain Robert Gordon-Canning, British Fascist Antisemitism and Islam,” *Holocaust Studies* 15, no. 1–2 (June 1, 2009): 88–89, doi:10.1080/17504902.2009.11087231.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 79–82.



congruent with that of the Nationalist-Islamic faction, which was organized around the Mufti Amin Husseini and his Palestine Arab Party.<sup>110</sup> His 1938 book *'The Holy Land: Arab or Jew?'* shows the influence of the anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and the 'War on Islam' narratives, which at that time were popularized in Palestine by the YMMA and the Mufti's newspapers.<sup>111</sup> The book presented Zionism as a conspiracy of Jewish bankers, who sought to subjugate or eradicate the Arabs for their imperial interests. He called Zionism the "*tenth crusade*", which was however not Christian in nature, but Bolshevistic.<sup>112</sup> In his combination of far-right and Islamic anti-Semitism, Gordon-Canning could be described as a pioneer. Besides Britain, AHC propaganda also targeted the US. Its campaign started with a fundraising tour by Tannous in May 1937.<sup>113</sup> AHC propaganda in the US in the years 1937-1939 will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

### 1.3 Emil Ghoury and the AHC's Christian Outreach

For years, Amin al-Husseini's AHC had campaigned in Arab and Muslim countries against Britain and Zionism. With the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1936, Arab Christians were instrumental in pushing for the internationalization of the Arab cause towards the West as well. In August 1936, leaders from all Christian confessions signed an appeal to the Christian World warning of a Jewish rule, which would result in Socialism and Anarchy. Reflecting Islamic propaganda, which peddled theories that the Zionists were intent on demolishing the Muslim holy structures on the Temple Mount in order re-erect their ancient temple, the appeal asked their foreign brethren "*to save the holy places from the Zionist danger*" and to stop Jewish immigration.<sup>114</sup> Emil Ghoury was the AHC propagandist responsible for Christian outreach. His Western education and Christian background perfectly prepared him for this role.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 82–85.

<sup>111</sup> Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 236.

<sup>112</sup> Macklin, "A Fascist 'Jihad,'" 86–87.

<sup>113</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 206.

<sup>114</sup> Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917-1948* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 147.

Ghoury had studied at the University of Cincinnati in the US, before returning to Palestine in 1933.<sup>115</sup> There, he worked as a journalist, writing prolifically for several pro-Mufti newspapers, including the weekly *Al-Shaab*, Jamal al-Husseini's *Al-Liwa*, *Al-Shabab* and the daily *The Arab Federation* (Arab. *Al-Wihda al-Arabia*), which appeared in both Arabic and English intermittently until 1935.<sup>116</sup> When Jamal Husseini left Palestine in 1936, Ghoury became the co-editor of *Al-Liwa*.<sup>117</sup> Many Arab Palestinian journalists were sympathetic to the rise of Fascism and National Socialism. This group included Emil Ghoury. In a 1934 article in *Al-Shabab*, he called on the Palestinian youth to emulate their European brethren: “*Oh Arab Youth! Awaken [sic] and see what the aggressive enemies have done to you. Exploited Palestine calls upon you to save it from the teeth of enslavement and exploitation. (...) In every town every village and every tent, you must found national youth companies as in Italy and Germany that will operate in favour of independence and Arab unity.*”<sup>118</sup> It was probably no coincidence that Amin al-Husseini had concluded an alliance with the Italians one year earlier, as will be discussed later.

Ghoury had started his political career as a follower of Amin al-Husseini in the early 1930s. He was active in the multi-partisan Youth Party, which was headed by Issa Bandak. Together with Alfred Rok, a lawyer from Jerusalem, he led the Palestine Arab Party since its establishment in 1935 by the Husseini faction to counter the influence of the Nashashibis' National Defense Party.<sup>119</sup> After 1936, he became the AHC's roving propagandist. From 1936 until 1939, he visited England, the Balkan countries and the US. One reason for choosing Ghoury for a senior position within the Arab political establishment seems to have been his Christian-Orthodox background. The British mandatory government drew a very unflattering portrait of him. High Commissioner Harold MacMichael wrote of him in 1940: “*He is in no sense a responsible leader, but*

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<sup>115</sup> Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39*, 14.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 72–73.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 144–45.

<sup>119</sup> Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine*, 117–18; Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939*, 11:111.

*an adventurer pure and simple, taken up by Haj Amin who was anxious to have a following amongst the Christian communities as well as amongst Moslems, and nothing more or less than a creature of Haj Amin. Apart from his qualifications as an agitator it may be assumed that in taking up Haj Amin was particularly influenced by the fact that he is a member of the Orthodox community and could be used to offset to some extent the influence of Yacoub Eff. Farraj who is a prominent member of that community but a staunch supporter of the rival Nashashibi faction.*"<sup>120</sup> However, Emil Ghoury proved loyal to Amin al-Husseini.

The first destination of Emil Ghoury was Eastern Europe. According to Nicola Khuri, an Arab nationalist and Orthodox priest from Jerusalem, it was Shakib Arslan who urged Amin al-Husseini to send a Christian delegation to Eastern Europe in order to solicit Christian support for the Arab national movement in Palestine.<sup>121</sup> At that time, there were two Christian members sitting on the AHC: Yacoub Farraj, a Greek Orthodox and Alfred Rok, a Roman Catholic.<sup>122</sup> After rejecting the Mufti's bid for him to undertake the trip, Farraj instead recommended Emil Ghoury and Nicola Khuri. In early September 1937, both men embarked on a public relations trip which brought them from Damascus to Istanbul and from there on to Sofia, Belgrade, Bucharest and other Eastern European cities, where they met with church representatives, media and politicians.<sup>123</sup> Leo Cohen from the Political Department of the Jewish Agency estimated that the tour pursued the goal of convincing the Balkan states to side with the Arabs in the League of Nations and to sway public opinion in "*Greek-Orthodox circles*" against the Jews in general and against Zionism in particular. On September 9, Cohen asked the Zionist Federations in Greece and Romania to take appropriate steps "*to counter*

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<sup>120</sup> Harold MacMichael, "Letter to Secretary of State for the Colonies George Lloyd," September 22, 1940, TNA CO 733/427/8.

<sup>121</sup> Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine*, 149.

<sup>122</sup> Martin Kolinsky, *Britain's War in the Middle East: Strategy and Diplomacy, 1936–42* (Springer, 2016), 52.

<sup>123</sup> Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine*, 149.

*this campaign of incitement.*"<sup>124</sup> In Romania, the two AHC delegates delivered an interview to the extreme right-wing daily, *Curuntul*, where they again raised the specter of the holy places being in danger. Like in the case of the crusader states, they declared, the Arab word would eventually wipe the Yishuv from the face of the world. Moreover, they described the Jewish woman as devoid of honor and claimed that Zionism had introduced communism to Palestine, as well as that the Arabs were not profiting from the Zionist project. Even if they were, they stated that the Arabs would prefer "*to be poor but free than rich but slaves.*"<sup>125</sup> Their messages thus exploited the rising fascist and anti-Semitic mood in the country.

At that time, Romania held a certain importance for the politics of the Yishuv, as its foreign minister, Victor Antonescu (not to be confused with the later dictator, Ion Victor Antonescu), served as rapporteur to the Permanent Mandates Commission at the League of Nations. According to the Romanian Zionists, these statements were widely received in the public, which was already widely permeated by anti-Semitism. In September, however, Romanian Zionist activists planned to counter the delegation's statement with a vigorous counter campaign and asked the Political Department of the Zionist Executive to assist them. They demanded more material on the pro-Zionist statements by the Maronite Patriarch, who had travelled Europe a few months before, for publication in the European press. Moreover, they suggested that the Political Department urge the Patriarch and the Lebanese president to release statements rejecting the claim that the holy places in Jerusalem were in danger and that the whole of the Arab Christian World was opposed to Zionism.<sup>126</sup> In December 1937, only five months after the delegation's visit, the openly anti-Semitic government of Octavian Goga would come into power, later introducing the first set of anti-Jewish laws.

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<sup>124</sup> Leo Cohen, "Letter by the Political Department of the Jewish Agency Zionist Organization in Bucharest," September 9, 1937, CZA S25/4156; Leo Cohen, "Letter by the Political Department of the Jewish Agency to the Zionist Federation in Greece," September 9, 1937, CZA S25/4156.

<sup>125</sup> "Letter by the Central Office of the Zionist Organization in Bucharest to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency," September 17, 1937, CZA S25/4156.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

#### 1.4 The Revisionist Powers and the AHC Propaganda

In contrast to France and Great Britain, National Socialist Germany and fascist Italy were motivated by a revisionist agenda, which sought to revolutionize the international order. Italy considered the Eastern Mediterranean as its own sphere of influence, challenging British dominance of the region. The escalation of the conflict in Palestine after 1936 can therefore also be understood as a result of Italian aspirations in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since the 1920s, Italy had sought to increase its influence in the Middle East by means of economic expansion, propaganda and eventually, military conquest. Propaganda encompassed an open, legitimate form, which can be summarized as cultural propaganda. The establishment of language schools within the framework of the Dante Alighieri Society, concert tours by Italian opera ensembles, and official state visits all belonged to this category. In 1928, the Italo-Palestine Committee was established under the aegis of the former Minister of Colonies Lanza di Scalea, to advance Italian interests.<sup>127</sup> However, since the early 1930s, Italy had indulged in an aggressive propaganda campaign in the Middle East, a campaign which was pro-Arabic, pro-Islamic as well as anti-British and anti-Zionist in nature. Italian propaganda invoked both geopolitical and ideological arguments, claiming a general affinity between Islam and Fascism, to justify Italy's friendship with the Islamic world.<sup>128</sup> These efforts were organized and coordinated in a centralized fashion. The Ministry of Popular Culture was responsible for the operational planning, following the guidelines set out by Foreign Office. Thus, propaganda was an essential pillar in realizing Italy's foreign policy goals.<sup>129</sup> Two events pushed the Italians to undertake a vigorous propaganda campaign towards the Arab and Muslim world in the 1930s. The suppression of the Libyan resistance had culminated in the forced resettlement of 100'000 inhabitants and the execution of the resistance leader, Omar Mukhtar, in 1931. Public opinion in the Arab world erupted against Italy, especially in Egypt. Italy's attack

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<sup>127</sup> Massimiliano Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940* (Routledge, 2010), 38–40.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>129</sup> Manuela Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad: Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940* (Routledge, 2006), 68.

on Ethiopia in 1935 provoked a similar reaction.<sup>130</sup> The campaign involved different operations. Radio Bari started broadcasting to the Middle East in 1934, finding a receptive audience in Palestine and Egypt. According to a British report from 1936, many Arabs found the mixture of news and entertainment appealing and the station was widely played in cafés. Its transmissions took on a sharp anti-British edge after 1935, which only lessened for a short period after the Easter Accords in April 1938.<sup>131</sup> While radio propaganda targeted the broader Arab population, other methods were prepared to gain support among the Arab elite. This included providing money to Arab newspapers, including Shakib Arslan's *La Nation Arabe*, bribing Arab intellectuals and offering assistance to the Arab nationalist movement in general, in particular its youth organizations.

During the 1930s, the Arab national movement in Palestine under the leadership of Amin al-Husseini profited greatly from its Italian ties. In spring 1933, Rome instructed the Italian Consul General in Jerusalem to establish relations with Amin Husseini and the Arab-Palestinian leadership.<sup>132</sup> At the same time, Shakib Arslan, suffering from financial difficulties, also chose to accept Italian bribes. For the next three to four years, he received two million Lira (about 27'000 pounds) each year for his publications. In addition, Arslan and Jabiri served as the intermediaries for Italian financial support to the Palestinian national movement under Amin al-Husseini. The effects of the agreement with Italy became immediately visible in Arslan's propaganda outlets. Dropping his former strident criticism of Italian policies, Arslan now concentrated his venomous attacks against the two other European powers in the Middle East, France and England. In a meeting between Arslan and Mussolini in early 1934, the terms of the agreement were finalized: Italy promised to soften its policy towards the Libyan Arabs and support the Arab cause in Syria and Palestine, in particular in matters of

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 135–36.

<sup>131</sup> Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940*, 40–42, 53–54.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 92.

propaganda. In exchange, the Arabs would rein in their criticism of Italian policies in North Africa.<sup>133</sup>

The effects of this alliance and Italy's increased aspirations in the Middle East were also felt in Europe. On December 21, 1933, the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (Ital. *Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente*) under the chairmanship of Giovanni Gentile, Italy's leading fascist philosopher, was inaugurated. One day later, on December 22, the first Conference of Oriental Students took place in Rome. It was a major cultural event, having been organized under the auspices of Fascist University Groups (Ital. *Gruppi universitari fascisti*) and enjoying the attendance of about 600 students.<sup>134</sup> Shakib Arslan assisted the Italians in organizing the conference.<sup>135</sup> Mussolini himself graced the event with a speech, positing the resurrection of a Mediterranean nation under the leadership of fascist Italy. A common spirit and their opposition to the Western powers united both. In particular, he blamed capitalism and liberalism for the European estrangement from the East: "*The Idea that Asia was inimical to Europe was formed and spread, while, in reality, it was about a particular mentality developing in certain European countries, which was incapable and indifferent to understand Asia.*" The reaction in Asia against the "*liberal and capitalist degeneration*", against the "*lack of soul and ideal*" in the West, was the same, which motivated Fascism, he declared. "*Today, with the Fascist renaissance, a foremost spiritual renaissance, Rome and the Mediterranean are about to reassume their unifying roles. And it is for this that the new Italy – this Italy – has assembled you here.*"<sup>136</sup> The listeners greeted Mussolini's speech with enthusiastic applause. The son of Ihsan Jabiri, Awnallah Jabiri, who represented the Arab students at the conference,

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<sup>133</sup> Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad*, 79; Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940*, 55–56.

<sup>134</sup> Stefano Fabei, "Un Ponte Verso l'Oriente," *Studi Piacentini* 32, no. 2002 (n.d.): 102.

<sup>135</sup> Mauro Piras, "Politica Islamica e Propaganda Fascista in Siria e Libano (1932-1940)" (Doctoral Thesis, Università degli Studi di Cagliari, 2012), 50, <http://veprints.unica.it/739/>.

<sup>136</sup> Fabei, "Un Ponte Verso l'Oriente," 103.

served as vice president, with the Indian representative Hussein Dabish acting as president. The conference lasted until December 27 when Dabish announced the establishment of the Confederation of Oriental Students (COS) to be seated in Rome. On April 6, 1934, the Permanent Office held its first reunion. According to president Jabiri, the COS's goals were to promote the feeling of comradeship among Asian students, to encourage Asian students to study in Europe and lastly to facilitate the rapprochement between Orient and Occident. After the conference, the COS of Oriental Students published the first issue of the monthly magazine *Jeune Asie*, which served as its official organ.<sup>137</sup> The Arab-Italian alliance was however not without risks, in particular for the Arabs.

Many Arabs and Muslims viewed Italy's propaganda offensive with suspicion, as Italy continued its colonial politics in Libya. This conflict would quickly enter the Arab student movement in Europe. On June 6, an Arab Student Committee in Geneva published a manifesto which condemned the COS as an "*Instrument in the hands of the imperialists*" and called for a boycott of everyone collaborating with the Italians.<sup>138</sup> The COS defended itself against this criticism by claiming that it was an apolitical body and cared simply for the interests of the students and their countries. A second conference of oriental students was held in Rome on December 28, 1934. There, it was decided to turn the COS into an umbrella organization for student groups. Jabiri was again elected as vice president to the COS with the representative for China, Suanne Liao, serving as president. At the conference, the leadership looked with optimism to the future, expressing its hope to be recognized as an official student organization by the League of Nations.<sup>139</sup> Three Jewish students from Palestine also attended the conference. An incident occurred when, during a discussion, an Arab student hit one of the Jewish students.<sup>140</sup> One of the Jewish students attending was probably Eliahu Epstein, who was later responsible for Oriental Affairs at the Political Bureau of the

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 104–6.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 106, 114.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 108–11.

<sup>140</sup> V. V. and U. F., "ORIENTE IN GENERALE," *Oriente Moderno* 15, no. 2 (1935): 70–71.



Jewish Executive.<sup>141</sup> However, due to rising tensions with Ethiopia, resulting in the war against Ethiopia in October 1935, the organization ceased most of its activity. The last issue of the *Jeune Asie* appeared in March 1935.<sup>142</sup> According to Eliahu Epstein, the oriental expert of the Political Bureau of the Jewish Agency, the majority of students left the group because of the war, with the remaining members being mostly Arabs. Many had ignored the organization's character as a tool of Italian foreign policy for a long time. Among those was also Eliahu Epstein, who reported that he had taken part in the activities of the COS during his time in Rome before becoming aware of its pro-fascist character.<sup>143</sup> The Arab-Italian alliance also proved to be controversial in Palestine itself.

Arslan's well-known political and personal ties to Amin al-Husseini soon become a liability for their enemies to exploit. Arslan's partner Ihsan Jabiri was also Musa al-Alami's father in law. This closeness of both circles turned Arslan's friendly stance toward the Italians into an issue of intra-Palestinian politics. In 1935, the Palestinian newspaper *Al Moqattan* published a letter by Arslan to the Mufti, in which he spoke about the agreement with Italy and a coordinated propaganda campaign. In the letter, Arslan also revealed how he had advised the Italians on how to sell their war in Abyssinia to the Muslim World by emphasizing alleged Abyssinian actions against Muslims. This left the impression that Arslan had sold out Arab interests. Arslan disputed the letter's authenticity. However, Munif al-Husseini's embrace of a pro-Italian line in an article in March 1935 in his newspaper *Al-Jamia al-Islamiya*, the Husseini clan's mouthpiece, seemed only to confirm the opposition's accusations of collusion between the Italians, Arslan and the Husseini clan. Another two subsequently published letters by Arslan both added credence to the accusation of collusion with the Italians. The first appeared again in the newspaper *Al-Jamia al-Islamiya* in April 1935, openly calling on the Mufti to abandon the British and support an Arab-Italian alliance.

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<sup>141</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Concerning the Letter of Kahany, Information about the Arab Student Association in Europe," November 26, 1937, CZA S25/4156.

<sup>142</sup> Fabei, "Un Ponte Verso l'Oriente," 113.

<sup>143</sup> Epstein, "Concerning the Letter of Kahany, Information about the Arab Student Association in Europe."

The second appeared a month later in the newspaper *Filastin*.<sup>144</sup> The British Foreign Office also learnt that Ihsan Jabiri had stated in private meetings that the Italians and the Syro-Palestinian Delegation had indeed reached an agreement.<sup>145</sup> The Italian's support for the Palestinian national movement encouraged an escalation of its diplomatic, propagandistic and military efforts.

Despite such controversies, Italian financial contributions to the Arab national movement were too significant to let go. In total, the Italians would expend about 150'000 pounds between 1933 and 1938. In early 1936, the Arab-Palestinian leadership under Amin Husseini prepared a plan to launch an insurgency in Palestine and topple Emir Abdullah in Transjordan, with the Italians pledging to contribute 100'000 pounds to the enterprise.<sup>146</sup> The money was directly funneled to the Mufti through Shakib Arslan, Ihsan Jabiri and Mariano de Angelis, the Italian Consul General in Jerusalem. Donations from Egypt, India, Iraq, but also the diaspora communities in the Americas collected by roving propagandists added to the financial base of the uprising, as discussed in Chapter Two. Ali Masud, an employee of the Italian consulate in Cairo, remitted the money collected in Egypt to the assistant manager of the Misr Bank, who would hand it out to Jamal Husseini.<sup>147</sup> However, in 1936 the British had become aware of these financial networks. British investigations moreover revealed that Ihsan Jabiri had embezzled 22'000 pounds from the donations. The Italians therefore advised the Arab leadership to organize the transfer of funds through an intermediary outside of Palestine. This function was assumed by Musa Alami, a

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<sup>144</sup> Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad*, 78–80; Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity 1930-1945*, Reprint edition (London, England ; Totowa, N.J.: Routledge, 1986), 65–66; see also Götz Nordbruch, *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon: The Ambivalence of the German Option, 1933–1945* (Routledge, 2009), 41; Ilan Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husaynis, 1700-1948* (London: Saqi Books, 2010), 298; Pappé however mistakes Shakib Arslan with his brother Adil Arslan.

<sup>145</sup> Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad*, 79.

<sup>146</sup> Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940*, 89–92.

<sup>147</sup> Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, 289.

confidant to the Mufti and the son-in-law of Jabiri. This allowed him to carry on his mission with due diligence for the duration of the entire revolt.<sup>148</sup> Musa Alami would play a central role in organizing AHC propaganda after World War II. The Italians also manipulated the Arab press on behalf of the Arab Revolt. They furnished articles, bribed journalists and financed newspapers in Palestine, Egypt and Syria to push them to an anti-British and pro-Italian line. In Jerusalem, the Swiss priest Alessandro Mombelli served as a liaison between the Arab journalists and the Italian government. He also provided atrocity propaganda to the Italians and to many Catholic newspapers in Europe, for which he served as their correspondent in Palestine.<sup>149</sup> The alliance between Italy, Arslan and the Husseini clan would hold for three years until the signing of the Easter Accords on April 16, 1938, the Mediterranean equivalent to the Munich Agreement, when Italy promised to halt its anti-British propaganda campaign in return for receiving Britain's acquiescence to its colonial conquests.<sup>150</sup> The cessation of Italian support contributed to the demise of the Arab Revolt in 1939.

After National Socialism's rise to power, several Arab leaders approached Germany, among them Amin Husseini and Abdullah I of Jordan, in the hope of securing its support. They wished to build on the traditional partnership between Imperial Germany and pan-Islam. Few others were better disposed than Arslan to provide a link between German foreign policy and Arab nationalism. Arslan had a long history with the Germans which reached back to World War I, when Germany had recruited a number of Arab propagandists. In October 1918, Oppenheim's colleague Curt Prüfer received the assignment to provide German passports for pro-German Arabs to help them settle in Switzerland. Among them was the Syrian Shakib Arslan, a gifted networker and already then one of the preeminent pan-Muslim intellectuals and publishers.<sup>151</sup> Arslan continued to maintain close personal and business ties with Germany. His old friend Curt Prüfer from the days of German-Turkish brothers-in-arms was now responsible

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<sup>148</sup> Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940*, 95–98.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–54.

<sup>151</sup> Donald M. McKale, *Curt Prufer, German Diplomat from the Kaiser to Hitler* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ Pr, 1987), 56.

for Oriental Affairs at *Abteilung III*, the Anglo-American and Middle Eastern Division in the German Foreign Office AA (Ger. *Auswärtiges Amt*). Curt Prüfer harbored a deep sympathy for the pan-Arab project to unify the Arabic-speaking peoples, which he felt paralleled German history. Moreover, he shared the religious nationalists' opinion that Islam would need to form the spiritual and legal base of such a state. Despite his personal affinities, he followed the precepts of German foreign policy in the early Hitler years, which considered the Middle East an area of minor importance and situated in the Italian sphere. Hitler was also keen to avoid provoking the English and the French during this early phase of his regime.<sup>152</sup> German reluctance was evident in November 1934, when Arslan and Jabiri travelled to Berlin to meet up with Curt Prüfer. In the meeting, Arslan proposed an Arab-German alliance, which would be useful in a future confrontation between Germany and France. After the meeting, Prüfer recalled Germany's disappointment with the Muslims in the First World War in his private notes. In spite of the Turkish declaration of Jihad, few Muslims had joined the German war effort. Prüfer therefore formally rejected Arslan's offer of alliance and his request for an audience with Hitler. In an internal memorandum from November 7, 1934, he recorded that Germany could not provide the Arabs with money and arms.<sup>153</sup> In February 1935, Arslan and Jabiri also approached Fritz Grobba, the German ambassador in Iraq, only to be rejected again.<sup>154</sup> Several other approaches followed. Only when Hitler abandoned his plans for a compromise with Great Britain in 1938, did he decide to support the Arab Revolt. German Intelligence chief Wilhelm Canaris reported in June 1939 that the Mufti Amin al-Husseini had thanked him profusely for this support, by asserting that "*Only through the monetary means provided by us had it been possible for him to stage the insurgency in Palestine.*"<sup>155</sup> Although militarily

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 113–14.

<sup>153</sup> Nordbruch, *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon*, 41–42; McKale, *Curt Prufer, German Diplomat from the Kaiser to Hitler*, 114.

<sup>154</sup> McKale, *Curt Prufer, German Diplomat from the Kaiser to Hitler*, 114.

<sup>155</sup> Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina*, Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsstelle Ludwigsburg der Universität Stuttgart (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 61–62.

defeated, the Arab Revolt in Palestine had reached its political goal. With the British adoption of the White Paper in 1939, the immigration of Jews was limited to 70'000 persons. As a result, there would never be a Jewish majority in Palestine and the Balfour Declaration had essentially been voided. Moreover, the White Paper trapped hundreds of thousands of Jews wanting to escape from Europe, with the worst possible consequences.

#### 1.5 AHC Networks in Syria and Egypt, Barudi's Arab National Bureau and the Bludan Congress

The outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1936 also greatly affected Palestine's neighbor states, in particular Syria. Many Syrians, especially from the elite, had family and business ties to Palestine. Both countries had belonged to the geographic and cultural region of Syria before the Ottoman defeat in World War I. Public support for the insurrection was pervasive. Many of the political elite belonged to the landowning class and had vested interests in Palestine. The governing Syrian party, the National Block, however was torn between pan-Arab solidarity and the pursuit of Syrian interests. When the Arab Revolt broke out, the National Block was in the middle of negotiations with France and was therefore interested in good relations with both Britain and France. Regarding the economy, the boycott of Jewish goods strengthened Arab entrepreneurs against their Jewish competitors, but it also jeopardized the extensive trade between Palestine and Syria. The National Block's initial policy was therefore inconsistent, vacillating between stoking public sentiment and acting in support of the revolt, while promising its Western partners to keep it at an acceptable level.<sup>156</sup> Still, the National Block hoped to derive legitimacy from its support of the insurrection.

Egypt's initial reaction to the outbreak of the Arab Revolt was very different from that of Syria. Until the 1930s, most Egyptians had shown little interest and/or sympathy for

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<sup>156</sup> Philip S. Khoury, "Divided Loyalties? Syria and the Question of Palestine, 1919–39," *Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 3 (1985): 324–31.

the Palestine issue.<sup>157</sup> With the Arab strike, which initiated the Arab Revolt in Palestine, the advocates of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic solidarity in Egypt intensified their propaganda efforts. On May 16, 1936, the Muslim Brotherhood formed the Central Committee for Aid to Palestine.<sup>158</sup> The YMMA convened a conference to find ways to help the Arabs in Palestine, which lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Supreme Committee of Relief for the Palestinian Victims (Arab. *al-Lajna al-uliya li-ighatat mankubi Falastin*). Although headed by Abd al-Hamid Said, the YMMA's president, it was not exclusively pan-Islamic in character, but also included liberal voices and prominent politicians from the ruling WAFD party. A press campaign in the leading Egyptian newspapers incited the popular mood with stories about desecrations of Mosques by British soldiers and Zionists besides the by now well-known allegations of plots to destroy the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. Anti-Semitism became rampant in Egypt. A weekly radio show by two professors from the renowned Al-Azhar University, which coupled their Coran commentaries with anti-Semitic remarks, also inflamed the situation.<sup>159</sup> David Kelley, the acting High Commissioner in Egypt, whose reports had hitherto emphasized the indifference Egyptians felt towards the Arab world and the Palestine Issue, observed the rise of a new "*Arab state of mind*" in Egypt.<sup>160</sup> The Egyptian government under Mustafa Nahas however was wary of losing control and set out to limit the activities of the Arab nationalists in the country. Thus, the newspaper *al-Shura* of Muhammed Ali al-Taher, an anti-Semitic and Islamist journalist, did not receive a license to continue its publication.<sup>161</sup> As a result of British and Egyptian policies, the extent of support for the Arab Revolt remained limited.

The situation was very different in Syria, where the French mandate government turned a blind eye to militant Arab nationalist activity on their soil. This and covert National Block support allowed Syria to become a safe haven for the organizers and

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<sup>157</sup> Abd al-Fattah Muhammad El-Awaisi, "The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1936-1947" (University of Exeter, 1986), 21–27.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>159</sup> Mayer, *Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1945*, 44–46.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 51.

propagandists of the Arab Revolt as well as a military staging ground for the entrance of Arab volunteers into Palestine. Both Islamic and Arab nationalist groups were active in the field, foremost the League of National Action and a multitude of Islamic societies. The latter would later form the core of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Yusuf al-Issa, a Palestinian Christian and a relative to the editor of the newspaper *Falastin* Issa al-Issa, had filled the pages of his publication *Alif Ba*, the leading Arabic newspaper in Damascus, since the 1920s with criticism of Zionism.<sup>162</sup> He now assumed the chair of the newly founded Palestine Defense Committee (PDC). Syrian support for the Arab Revolt proved essential for the revolt's maintenance. It was organized through the *Istiqlal* (Engl. Independence) party, which had branches in several Arab countries, but was strongest in Palestine and Syria. Soon after its establishment, leaders of the Istiqlal party, including Fakri al-Barudi, Fuad Mufarrij and Nabih al-Azma, took over the Palestine Defense Committee. Istiqlal members also collected money in Syria, which was then transferred through Istiqlal member Nabih al-Azma, who lived in Palestine, to the AHC leadership. In the same vein, weapons procured by members of the Istiqlal in Transjordan were funneled into Palestine. In July 1936, the Palestine Defense Committee dispatched about 700 Arab volunteers to fight in Palestine under the command of Fawzi al-Qawuqij, a veteran of the 1925-27 Great Syrian Revolt.<sup>163</sup> After the outlawing of the AHC in late September 1937, Syria effectively became the staging ground for the Arab Revolt in Palestine in the second, more violent phase of the Arab Revolt. The Palestinian Istiqlal politicians Akram Zuaiter, Izzat Darwaza as well as Jamal Husseini and other notable figures formed the *Central Committee of Jihad in Damascus*, which aspired to coordinate the Arab Revolt.<sup>164</sup> Syria was not only important from a military point of view.

Syria was also the country where much of the international propaganda for the Arab Revolt was organized. The Arab National Bureau for Research and Information ANBRI (Fr. *Bureau National Arabe de Recherches et d'Informations*) was central in this effort. The man behind ANBRI was Fakhri al-Barudi, a leading Arab nationalist publicist and

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<sup>162</sup> Khoury, "Divided Loyalties?," 326.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 330–31; Nordbruch, *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon*, 60.

<sup>164</sup> Hillel Frisch, *The Palestinian Military: Between Militias and Armies* (Taylor & Francis, 2008), 22–23.

politician of Syrian origin with a long experience in propaganda. He was born in 1889 to a wealthy landowning family and for a time studied agriculture in Paris without graduating. He fought with the Ottomans during World War I, attaining the rank of an officer, before joining the Arab Revolt in 1917. Switching to business endeavors, he was long absent from politics before he reemerged during the Great Syrian Revolt (1925-27) as one of its chief propagandists. In 1928, he was elected to the Syrian Constituent Assembly for the National Bloc. A special concern for Barudi was education. For this purpose of setting up national education programs, he started a fundraising campaign in 1932. However, the collected donations were not invested in education, but used to fund his Barudi Bureau for Propaganda and Publication (Arab. *Maktab al-Barudi lil diya wa al nashr*), which was opened in October 1934, and later became known as ANBRI.<sup>165</sup> ANBRI employed several employees, recruiting unemployed Syrian intellectuals, and even possessed its own printing press.<sup>166</sup> With its level of sophistication, ANBRI undoubtedly fulfilled a pioneering role in the history of Arab propaganda.

Barudi believed that in order to achieve a pan-Arab state, it was essential to put the issue onto the international agenda. The way to do this was through propaganda, as was evidenced by several historic examples. This was the rationale for founding ANBRI, as he explained in a 1937 article: *"History lets us know that modern Poland as well as Czechoslovakia could only constitute themselves as independent countries with the help of certain efficient means, among else 'propaganda'. We mean propaganda in its double function as external and internal. The men of these countries could, thanks to the propaganda effectuated by them in the different capitals of the world, turn the questions of their countries into international and global questions. The Arabs must follow their example and make use of a disciplined propaganda, active and continuous, in order to make the questions of their countries an international question,*

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<sup>165</sup> Philip Shukry Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 274–77.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.



*which bears influence on the global peace and war.*"<sup>167</sup> Al-Barudi seems to have taken this idea from a British author, Eugene Young, who believed that the fact that the Arabs had not invested enough effort in propaganda was the principal reason for the failure to establish a Greater Syria after World War I: "*Mr. Eugene Young, in his book entitled the 'Arab Revolt', says: 'The principal reason for the failure of the Arabs at the Peace Conference and for the ills which afflicted them since then needs to be attributed to that they have not, in contrast to the Poles, the Czechs and the Yugoslavs, put propaganda to use in the service of their cause.'*"<sup>168</sup> Al-Barudi also cited the advice of British publisher Lord Northcliffe, already mentioned above, in which he advised the Arabs to invest more in propaganda in Britain.<sup>169</sup> The advice, whether real or imagined, obviously made an impression on al-Barudi and is also cited in the report by the propaganda committee at the Bludan Congress in September 1937, which he headed.<sup>170</sup> The Arab congress, which took place in the Syrian resort town of Bludan in September 1937, enhanced al-Barudi's already prominent role in the pan-Arab propaganda effort.

The Bludan Congress took place one month after the return of the Syrian intellectual Amin Rihani to the Middle East from a propaganda tour in the US together with AHC member Izzat Tannous. He returned with the impression that the Zionists wielded enormous financial and political power in the US.<sup>171</sup> This was a general pattern among Arab propagandists in the US. It is not difficult to see that this obsession with supposed Zionist power led Arab nationalists to be concerned with international and US public opinion and may have contributed to the issue's move to the center stage at the Bludan Congress. Kedourie suggests that Amin al-Husseini organized the congress with the goal to increase pressure on Great Britain, already heavily under stress due to the Arab

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<sup>167</sup> Centre des hautes études sur l'Afrique et l'Asie moderne, "Notes sur le bureau national Arabe de recherches et d'informations de Damas," 4.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Cesarani, "Anti-Zionist Politics and Political Antisemitism in Britain, 1920–1924," 6.

<sup>170</sup> Elie Kedourie, "The Bludan Congress on Palestine, September 1937," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 1 (January 1, 1981): 122.

<sup>171</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 199–200.

Revolt in Palestine, to abandon its promise of a Jewish national home and drop the Peel partition plan.<sup>172</sup> Recognizing the explosive potential of the conference, the British pressed the Egyptian and the Syrian governments not to attend.<sup>173</sup> A confidant of the Egyptian premier Mustafa Nahas, Amin al-Uthman, however did attend in secret.<sup>174</sup> According to Italian records, the main organizer of the event was Nabih al-Azma, a member of the Syrian National Bloc party, who received payments from the Italians. This confirms British information at the time that Italy clandestinely supported the congress financially. Other funding came from the AHC as well as Lebanese and Syrian sources.<sup>175</sup> Despite the pressure, the event was well-attended by leading Arab nationalist and pan-Islamic politicians and would prove instrumental in internationalizing the Arab-Zionist dispute in Palestine and in mobilizing Arab and Muslim public opinion

Underscoring its centrality, the sole concern of one working committee was the question of propaganda. The committee was chaired by ANBRI chief Fakhri al-Barudi and consisted of 37 members. Syrians and Lebanese constituted a clear majority of 23. Four members were Palestinians, among them the famous journalist and editor of *Falastin*, Issa al-Issa, Akram Zuaiter as well as Yussef Haikal and Wadi Bustani. This list of members alone attests to the fact that the conflict had already reached a high level of internationalization. The committee identified the lack of propaganda as the principal reason behind Arab foreign policy failures from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 until contemporary issues in Palestine, echoing al-Barudi's thesis. It devised a comprehensive propaganda program directed at Arab, Muslim and foreign audiences. The propaganda would drive home the point that a Jewish state was a concern for all Arabs, a threat to the realization of Arab independence and unity as well as glory. The future Muslim propaganda effort would concentrate on emphasizing the religious importance of Palestine due to the presence of Muslim holy places, warning that other

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<sup>172</sup> Kedourie, "The Bludan Congress on Palestine, September 1937," 107–8.

<sup>173</sup> Khoury, "Divided Loyalties?," 339.

<sup>174</sup> Mayer, *Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1945*, 79.

<sup>175</sup> Piras, "Politica Islamica e Propaganda Fascista in Siria e Libano (1932-1940)," 193; Kedourie, "The Bludan Congress on Palestine, September 1937," 111.

Muslim holy places and the Muslim faith itself were threatened by an expanding Jewish State. *"The evil of a Jewish state in Palestine will not be confined to the holy places there, but will spread to other places held as holy by the Arabs and Moslems everywhere, (...) and prevent them from enjoying their religious liberty which is the most essential part of the Moslem's life."*<sup>176</sup> Thus, the Bludan Congress subscribed to the conspiracy theory of a 'Jewish war against Islam' and was dedicated to spreading it. To organize its propaganda campaign, al-Barudi's propaganda committee decided to establish a main office with local branches in all Arab countries as well as London, Geneva and the United States. Furthermore, they planned dispatch delegations to Arab, Islamic and other countries to inform on the Arab view point regarding Palestine. The program foresaw the involvement of Arab states in the propaganda campaign on a massive scale and in a comprehensive way, which mirrored that of the totalitarian regimes in Europe: Thus, holidays should be dedicated to the conflict in Palestine to spread awareness and raise financial, moral and political support, propaganda material produced and speeches held at schools, churches and mosques.<sup>177</sup> This prefigured the information policy of the Arab dictatorships, which were established after World War II.

In the view of its participants, Bludan was a resounding success. In the preface of the proceedings of the congress, which were published by ANBRI, Amin Rihani stated that the Bludan conference constituted an important step towards Arab Unity. Its program can be summarized in three points: Liberation of Palestine from Zionism and imperialism, the liberation of the other Arab countries from foreign oppression and, eventually, the union of said Arab countries.<sup>178</sup> Bludan also catapulted al-Barudi's propaganda bureau to greater prominence, which only now assumed the name Arab National Bureau for Research and Information and took on a more or less official character. At its apogee in 1939, ANBRI employed 16 persons.<sup>179</sup> Fakhri Barudi's

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<sup>176</sup> Kedourie, "The Bludan Congress on Palestine, September 1937," 123.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Enrico Nunè, "L'idea dell'unità Araba in recenti dibattiti della stampa del Vicino Oriente," *Oriente Moderno* 18, no. 8 (1938): 401–12.

<sup>179</sup> Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 274–77.

secretary, the young Syrian nationalist Fuad Mufarrij, played an important role in ANBRI. Mufarrij had studied at the AUB, graduating in 1935 with a thesis on 'Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate'.<sup>180</sup> Despite his young age, Mufarrij was one of the leading Arab nationalist activists in Syria, acting as the Secretary General of the Palestine Defense Committee since 1936 together with other leaders of the Istiqlal party, among them Fakhri Barudi and Nabih al-Azma,.<sup>181</sup> Mufarrij would accompany Barudi in 1938 on a trip to the USA, where he would die in a car accident. The Arab National Bureau could also profit from a community of politically active exiles in Syria and abroad. In January 1938 for instance, the Tripolitanian exile leader Bashir Saadawi wrote to Shakib Arslan to ask for a position in the propaganda office. Shakib's brother Adil had just been selected as the Syrian legate to Paris and Saadawi must certainly have hoped that Shakib would be able to exert some influence on ANBRI's composition. A section of ANBRI dealt exclusively with North Africa, printing anti-Italian, anti-Spanish and anti-French pamphlets. Although these efforts were apparently in vain.<sup>182</sup>

Besides propaganda, ANBRI pursued a broad and ambitious educational program, which was set out in its statutes. Its content followed the spirit of Arab reformists. It included general social concerns, such as the promotion of women's and workers' rights. However, the main goal of ANBRI, as suggested by its name, was propaganda and popular education. Although most of the aims set out in its program were certainly unrealistic and never achieved, they give a good impression of the ideas of its founders and therefore merit mention here. True to Barudi's original plans, the program described ANBRI as a place of research and also education. It would collect publications in the Arab world, send out students to comb through libraries to find Arab books and manuscripts, organize conferences, and encourage students to study in Europe at ANBRI's expense. In contrast to most of the other points of the program, its propaganda plans at home and abroad were more realistic. In Syria, ANBRI would

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<sup>180</sup> See bibliography in Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (University of Texas Press, 2009), 200.

<sup>181</sup> Nordbruch, *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon*, 60.

<sup>182</sup> Bashir Saadawi, "Letter to Shakib Arslan," January 31, 1938, CHBAR E2001D#1000/1552#8771\*.

refute the critiques of foreign writers and support the friends of the Arab cause. Abroad, ANBRI would seek to establish branches in European and American cities (the foremost being London and Paris) to collaborate with Arab diplomats, furnish articles to the press as well as liaise with eminent personalities and sympathizers. Besides political propaganda, it would also promote tourism and trade. The Arabs who lived as foreigners in the West were of special concern to ANBRI. A special branch of ANBRI would form links between the emigrants, their associations and their respective governments. It would also strive to tighten the connections between the Arab youth abroad and Arab countries by different means, such as the organization of trips.<sup>183</sup> Such an ambitious program certainly required extensive funding, which would have been difficult for a private body to obtain. It seems that the Arab National Bureau was directly submitted to the Syrian Foreign Office, reflecting the fact that it was primarily created to target foreign audiences in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>184</sup> Its statutes declared that it set upon itself to “*deliver authentic news to parties, associations, newspapers, Arabs at home and abroad and to sound the voice of the country to the English and French world in particularly and to all European nations in general.*”<sup>185</sup> The contemporary Italian orientalist Virginia Vacca observed: “*The Office should be regarded as a quasi-public body, which in the long period of transition from the Mandate to independence, lends itself to actions that the government cannot carry out directly.*”<sup>186</sup> It is unclear whether ANBRI assumed its official function only after the Bludan conference in September 1937, or before. The rationale for its unclear status however is evident: During the 1930s and especially after the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, which received substantial support from Syria, the Syrian government was interested in deniability. Because it was engaged in negotiations with France and counted on British support for independence, it sought to maintain good relations with

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<sup>183</sup> Virginia Vacca, “L’ufficio Nazionale Arabo Di Stampa e Propaganda Di Damasco e Le Sue Pubblicazioni,” *Oriente Moderno* 18, no. 12 (1938): 683–84.

<sup>184</sup> Saadawi, “Letter to Shakib Arslan.”

<sup>185</sup> Vacca, “L’ufficio Nazionale Arabo Di Stampa e Propaganda Di Damasco e Le Sue Pubblicazioni,” 683.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 684.

both European powers, while not renouncing its support for the more radical Arab nationalists.

AMBRI not only sought to appeal to the Arab world, but also to a Western audience. Thus, AMBRI's publications appeared in French, English and Arabic, dealing with the contemporary political issues in the Arab world, especially Zionism and the question of Alexandretta. One booklet defended the boycott of Jewish-Palestinian goods then in place in Syria, making the case that it was not harming the local economy. Another booklet titled 'Dictatorship in the Holy Land' contained an article by T. E. Richmond, the former council on Arab Affairs in Mandate Palestine, which, repeating a popular misconception among anti-Zionist Arabs, equated Zionism with Bolshevism. The works generally promoted a pan-Islamic and pan-Arab agenda. In the booklet 'Panarab Developments', the Syrian-American man of letters Amin Rihani recounted the recent history of the Arab nationalist movement and praised Ibn Saud as its leader. ANBRI also published a daily Arabic-language bulletin, which reported news from all the Arab countries and from American Arabs as well as comments by ANBRI, which were widely reported in the Syrian press.<sup>187</sup> As noted above, ANBRI directly sought to influence public debates with regard to Middle Eastern issues in Europe. Thus, in 1938 it published a response to the book '*Alerte en Syrie!*' directed at French readers by the then popular French writers and reporters Jérôme and Jean Tharaud. Allegedly, each parliamentarian had received a copy of it. The booklet, which carried the title '*Syrie – La situation en Syrie après la conclusion du traité franco-syrien*' attacked the two French intellectual figures for inaccuracies and affirmed Syria's loyalty to France to its readers.<sup>188</sup> In line with its internationalization strategy, ANBRI sought the cooperation of public figures of anti-Zionist and pro-Arab convictions in France and England, like the Socialist politician Robert Longuet, a colleague of Shakib Arslan, or Lord

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 687–89.

<sup>188</sup> Virginia Vacca, review of *Syrie 1938. La situation en Syrie après la conclusion du traité franco-syrien* by Office National Arabe de Recherches et d'Informations, by Office National Arabe de Recherches et d'Informations, *Oriente Moderno* 18, no. 6 (1938): 326.

Sydenham and planned to open branches in the major cities and in the capitals of the leading nations.<sup>189</sup> However, these grand plans never materialized.

ANBRI propaganda included anti-Semitic material. Thus, ANBRI published a heavily anti-Semitic 31 page booklet with the title 'Jews and Moslems in past and present – The Jews and Palestine and the verses of Jihad and the hadiths related to it' (Arab. *al-Yahud wa al-Islam qadiman wa hadithan wa ayat al-jihad wa al-ahadith anhu*). Mohammed Ali al-Taher's Arab-Palestinian Information Office in Cairo for the Islamic World had first edited the booklet.<sup>190</sup> Anti-Semitic material published by ANBRI even reached the French-ruled North African countries.<sup>191</sup> ANBRI publications were also distributed with the help of the AHC's propaganda network in the Middle East. The outlawing of the AHC by the Palestine mandate government in late September 1937, after the murder of a British official, and the subsequent dispersal of its followers had paradoxically helped the AHC to extend its propaganda network. Amin Husseini's nephew Munif Husseini, whom the British had exiled from Palestine in the winter of 1937, moved to Cairo after a short stop in Damascus. Munif, the former editor of the newspaper *Al-Jammat al-Arabiya*, was one of the most experienced propagandists of the Husseini clan who, through his publications, had played an instrumental role in promulgating the myth that one of the main goals of Zionism was to take over the Temple Mount. In Egypt, he supported the propaganda work of the existing pan-Arab and pan-Islamic circles by joining Taher's Arab-Palestinian Information Office. However, he was soon arrested by the British authorities and exiled again, this time to the Seychelles, but released in 1939.<sup>192</sup> Akram Zuaiter, Izzat Darwaza and Jamal Husseini, the leaders of the Central Committee of Jihad in Damascus also opened a

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<sup>189</sup> Centre des hautes études sur l'Afrique et l'Asie moderne, "Notes sur le bureau national Arabe de recherches et d'informations de Damas," 5.

<sup>190</sup> Muhammed Ali al-Tahir, ed., *Jews and Moslems in Past and Present, Jews and Palestine. Verses (from the Koran) for the Holy War with Explanations*. (Cairo: Palestine Arab Committee in Egypt, 1937).

<sup>191</sup> Gudrun Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952* (I.B.Tauris, 1989), 146.

<sup>192</sup> Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, 249, 289; Mayer, *Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1945*, 81–82.

branch of the Arab-Palestinian Information Office in Damascus in 1938, which published propaganda manifests.<sup>193</sup> The military defeat of the Arab Revolt in August 1939 however terminated the AHC's international propaganda effort.

This defeat was brought about by a number of factors. From 1938 until 1939, the leaders of the Revolt lost their support from Italy, Syria and Saudi Arabia. With the negotiations with Britain progressing, in early 1938 Italy halted all help to Amin al-Husseini. On the background of British endeavors to appease the Arabs, which would find expression in the 1939 White Paper, the Italians urged the Arab leadership to find a settlement with the British. The Easter Accords signed on April 16, 1938 cemented the Italian-British rapprochement. From this time forward, Mussolini and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Galeazzo Ciano, would turn down all Amin Husseini's pleas for support. This happened against the explicit advice of Italian career diplomats. In September 1937, the British had also discovered that Saudi Arabia, which they had long believed to be a loyal friend, was funneling money and weapons provided by Italy to the Arab Revolt. When the British later confronted Ibn Saud with these facts, he resolved to discontinue his support.<sup>194</sup> Perhaps even more importantly, the AHC support base in Syria had also dried up by late 1938. The French had long ignored requests from the British to shut down the militant nationalists' scene in Syria, which provided a safe haven for the organization of the Arab Revolt in Palestine. Quite possibly, they acted this way as a retaliation for the British having ignored similar support from Palestinian soil during the 1925-27 Arab Revolt in Syria.<sup>195</sup> In early 1939 however, the French started to act and cracked down on the militant Arab nationalist groups operating from Syria. Akram Zuaiter and Nabih al-Azma of the Palestine Defense Committee were arrested in March 1939 and two of their newspapers banned. The Committee was moreover discredited by the publication of evidence showing that Nabih al-Azma had been embezzling funds from the Palestine Defense Committee.<sup>196</sup> The Mandate government in Palestine planted similar stories in local newspapers and

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<sup>193</sup> Frisch, *The Palestinian Military*, 22–23.

<sup>194</sup> Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940*, 105–9.

<sup>195</sup> Khoury, "Divided Loyalties?," 340–41.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 344–45.



distributed these articles to Syrian Arab associations abroad.<sup>197</sup> As a result, the Arab National Bureau also toned down its propaganda and the support network eventually collapsed.<sup>198</sup> On the military front, the Arab Revolt was defeated through British counterinsurgency in Palestine.<sup>199</sup> Still, the paramount goal of the Arab Revolt, a curtailing of Jewish immigration to the country, had been reached with the introduction of the White Paper.

## 1.6 Conclusion

Propaganda has been central feature of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine since the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The propaganda conducted by the Arab national leadership in Palestine, in particular Amin al-Husseini and his SMC, sought to turn the conflict into an issue of international concern by appealing to all Arabs and Muslims. For this purpose, it framed the conflict as a religious war between Muslims and Jews, aided by the British, and popularized the conspiracy theory of a 'Jewish war against Islam', which had first become prominent after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Thus, there was no Islamization of the conflict. Rather, the conflict had both a religious and a national dimension from the beginning. Through the organizations of conferences, the dispatching of delegations to Muslim countries and the distribution of propaganda, the Arab national leadership in Palestine sought to raise the profile and thereby secure the solidarity of Muslims from around the world. Already in the early 1920s, Arab nationalists became aware of the need to influence both the government and public opinion in Britain. In this effort, Arab propagandists were aided by local sympathizers, many of whom harbored anti-Semitic prejudices. The outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936 led to a professionalization and intensification of the propaganda effort. The AHC established information offices in London, Cairo and Damascus and

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<sup>197</sup> Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: 1936-1939 Rebellion in the Palestinian Past* (University of Arkansas Press, 2003), 116.

<sup>198</sup> Khoury, "Divided Loyalties?," 344–45.

<sup>199</sup> For the British counterinsurgency operation, see Matthew Hughes, "The Banality of Brutality: British Armed Forces and the Repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39," *The English Historical Review* 124, no. 507 (2009): 313–354; Norris, "Repression and Rebellion."

dispatched delegations to the US, the UK and Eastern Europe. Christian, Western-educated Arabs like Emil Ghoury were preferred for the outreach to Western and Christian audiences. During their trip to Eastern Europe, an AHC-delegation including Ghoury exploited the reigning anti-Semitic mood in the region. The AHC could also count on the professional services of the semi-official Arab National Bureau of Fakhri al-Barudi. Networks of Arab emigrants and pro-Arab sympathizers in Switzerland, Germany, France, the US and Britain supported this information campaign. In addition, it enjoyed the support of the two revisionist powers, Italy and Germany. Belief in overwhelming Jewish financial power and political influence pushed the Arab nationalists into further investing in propaganda after the Arab congress in Bludan in Syria. Despite the Arab Revolt's military defeat, it achieved major political gains for the Arab national movement in Palestine. By successfully internationalizing the conflict and recruiting sympathizers from both the Arabo-Muslim world and the West, the propaganda campaign contributed to intimidating Britain into effectively scrapping the Balfour Declaration through the adoption of the White Paper. Thus, the propaganda campaign accompanying the Arab Revolt had created a template which would be taken up again after 1944 in the international campaign against the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

## 2 Anti-Zionist Networks in the US before World War II

This chapter studies the history of anti-Zionism in the US during the period from 1917-1941. The period is delineated by two watershed moments. On November 2, 1917, Britain endorsed the goals of the Zionist movement to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine as its own policy. In December 1941 on the other hand, the US declared war on the Axis powers. Prior to the Balfour Declaration, Zionism had been a primarily intra-Jewish issue. The bulk of opposition to Zionism in the US had initially come from Reform Jews, who rejected Jewish nationalism based on their belief that Judaism was a religion and not a people. They were fearful that Zionism would hinder their integration into society, exposing them to the charge of dual loyalty. After the Balfour Declaration, however, Zionism became a topic of public debate for the broader society. Both the president and Congress had supported the Balfour Declaration, but there was significant opposition to Zionism from influential political circles and in the wider civil society. The State Department had been skeptical about Zionism since the Balfour Declaration and continued to follow its own agenda, often defying the wishes of the American political leadership. Anti-Zionist Reform Jews, mainstream Protestants of missionary stock as well as pan-Syrian Arab Americans stood at the forefront of anti-Zionism, seeking to shape American foreign policy according to their ideas and establishing their own organization. Activist scholars, such as Philip Hitti or George Antonius, turned the university into another battlefield between Zionists and anti-Zionists. Events in Palestine, foremost the 1929 riots and the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936, but also the rise of National-Socialism and the persecution of the European Jews, affected the general public opinion and thus the fate of the anti-Zionist movement in the US. With US public opinion regularly shifting, the debate on Zionism would only be resolved after the war.

### 2.1 The Missionary Network and the origins of Protestant anti-Zionism

US foreign policy expertise regarding the Middle East was concentrated in a small circle, most of whom were united in their Protestant missionary background. Since 1819, American Protestants had been involved in missionary work in the Middle East. Originally, there was a strong dispensationalist element within the missionary

enterprise. The religious movement of dispensationalism considered the conversion of the Jews to Christianity and their restoration to the Land of Israel as a precondition for the return of Jesus. However, the focus of the missionaries soon shifted from the Jews and the Muslims, where they made precious few converts, to the region's native Christians.<sup>200</sup> The original enterprise was replaced by a 'mission civilisatrice', which sought to achieve what the director of the American University of Beirut, Stephen Penrose, later called "*a regeneration in the spirit of the people*".<sup>201</sup> The promotion of Arabic printing and the establishment of elementary and secondary missionary schools, most notably the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut in 1864, were crucial in accomplishing this mission. The Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, which was renamed the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 1920, came to be one of the intellectual centers of Arab nationalism.<sup>202</sup>

Pro-Arab scholars and activists in the 1930s and 40s acknowledged the important role American Protestant missionaries played in the ushering in of an Arab revival, which led to the creation of pan-Arab nationalism. They looked back at this period with unequivocal pride, a feeling which united anti-Zionist Arabs and Americans. Thus, George Antonius wrote about this period: "*The educational activities of the American missionaries in that early period had, among many virtues, one outstanding merit; they gave the pride of place to Arabic, and, once they had committed themselves to teaching in it, put their shoulders with vigour to the task of providing an adequate literature. In that, they were the pioneers; and because of that, the intellectual effervescence which marked the first stirrings of the Arab revival owes most to their*

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<sup>200</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Nearest East: American Millennialism and Mission to the Middle East*, Reprint edition (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 107–8; Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 23.

<sup>201</sup> Stephen Beasley Linnard Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut, 1866-1941* (American University of Beirut, 1941), 5.

<sup>202</sup> Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 24.

*labours.*<sup>203</sup> Harry R. Snyder, a longtime pro-Arab activist and trustee of the AUB,<sup>204</sup> wrote about this period in 1950: “*Thus, by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Americans had succeeded beyond Napoleon’s wildest dreams of conquering the Middle East, but the Americans conquered the area by the book and not by the sword.*”<sup>205</sup> Moreover, it is at the AUB, where “*young Middle Easterners are trained to take control of their own countries and of their own destinies.*”<sup>206</sup> Only much later, American intellectual influence in the region through the so-called ‘Orientalists’ came to be perceived more critically by pro-Arab thinkers.

The pro-Arab sentiment of the missionary circles contrasted sharply with their view of the Turks who were perceived to be uncivilized and warlike. This negative perception of the Turks is easily understandable in light of the persecution of Christian minorities, and in particular of the Armenians, to which the American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire were often eyewitnesses. Although the missionary circles were also fearful of Islamic extremism among Arabs, they retained a distinctively more positive outlook towards them. This was also partly due to the racial concepts of the time. Students at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut were taught that the Arabs were part of the white race and superior to the Turks, although inferior to the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>207</sup> Non-Jewish Westerners in the Middle East and Palestine, including colonial officials and missionaries, also often appreciated Arabs for their naturalness and “*putatively exotic*

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<sup>203</sup> George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement. [With Maps.]* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), 43.

<sup>204</sup> “Trustees of the American University of Beirut” (AUB, January 31, 1946), PHP 9.10.

<sup>205</sup> Harry R. Snyder, “The Story of Americans in the Middle East” May 20, 1950, HRSP 6.26.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U. S. -Arab Relations* (Public Affairs Press, 2011), 107–8.

*qualities*".<sup>208</sup> This perception of the Arab stood in the tradition of the 'noble savage'. Jews defied such an easy categorization. Rather, in Protestant missionary literature, Jews were often described as being materialistic, exploitative, nationalistic, bigoted or bolshevist, reflecting common anti-Semitic prejudices.<sup>209</sup> These attitudes including the history of the Protestant presence in the region and Christian theological arguments against Jewish nationalism (to be discussed in more detail below) all influenced the Protestant missionary attitude towards Zionism negatively. It was therefore no surprise that the reaction towards the Balfour Declaration by the US Middle Eastern experts and the Protestant missionary circles, two groups which were to some extent congruent, was overly negative. They saw Zionism as an aggressive attempt by a minority to dominate the Arab majority in Palestine in connivance with an imperialistic power.

After World War I, the Protestant missionary network in the Middle East soon became involved in US foreign policy during the peace negotiations. As noted above, these American missionaries tended to identify with the interests of Arab nationalism and as a result opposed the French presence in the region. Though less inimical than towards the French, they were also skeptical of British aspirations in the region.<sup>210</sup> In 1918, Abraham Mitrie Ribhany, an Arab-American Unitarian minister in Boston published the book *'America Save the Near East'*. Therein he made the case for the creation of a Greater Syria under an American mandate.<sup>211</sup> Ribhany was sympathetic to the Jewish people and recognized their historical rights in Palestine. Moreover, he recognized that Arab opposition to Zionism was "(...) *not entirely free from racial and religious prejudice*

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<sup>208</sup> Gardiner H. Shattuck, "'True Israelites': Charles Thorley Bridgeman and Anglican Missions in Palestine, 1922-1948," *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 2008, 136.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 136–37.

<sup>210</sup> Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 24–27 via; Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 7–8.

<sup>211</sup> Lawrence Davidson, "Debating Palestine: Arab-American Challenges to Zionism, 1917-1932," *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, 1999, 230; Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941*, 204.

(...).” Anti-Semitism was a crucial factor in it: “*The impetus which Zionism has received recently has greatly alarmed the Christians and Mohammedans of Palestine. In the first place, the universal prejudice against the Jews is shared by those sects in the East. The Jews ‘crucified Christ’ and ‘dealt treacherously with Mohammed.’ Until they abjure the sins of their fathers and are converted to the faith of their persecutors, the Jews will remain in disfavor.*”<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, he was convinced that the project of a Jewish state lay in the interests of neither the Jews nor the Arabs. Palestine was unable to provide for a solution to the ‘Jewish Problem’, having the capacity to accept 3 to 4 million new immigrants. He argued that the Muslims would never accept a Jewish state in Palestine. Despite Palestine’s Jewish past, the Muslims regarded Palestine as their land because their conquest of the land had turned them into its legal owners. Separating Palestine from Greater Syria and turning it into a Jewish state would be the source of future national and religious conflict. Instead, he advocated local self-government for the Jews and constitutional safeguards.<sup>213</sup> This was the intellectual climate that influenced the upcoming peace negotiations, which would decide the future of the former Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

At the stipulation of Howard Bliss, the President of the AUB, on March 20, 1919, the Paris Peace Conference formed a multilateral commission to investigate the conditions in Greater Syria and the will of its local people. Out of fear of finding popular opposition against the mandate order, both the British and the French withdrew from taking part in the Commission. The commission became known as the King-Crane commission after its two chairmen Charles Crane and Henry C. King, a professor at Oberlin College. They were assisted by Captain William Yale, Dr. George Montgomery and Albert Lybyer, a Middle East historian and a former professor at the Oberlin College.<sup>214</sup> Oberlin College was strongly connected with missionary enterprises in the Middle East.

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<sup>212</sup> *America Save the Near East* (The Beacon Press, 1918), 113–14, <http://archive.org/details/americasavenear00rihbgoog>.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–24.

<sup>214</sup> Frank W. Brecher, “Charles R. Crane’s Crusade for the Arabs, 1919–39,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 24, no. 1 (1988): 42–55.

Crane also served as a trustee for two missionary colleges in Constantinople.<sup>215</sup> Thus, from the outset, Protestant missionary influence within the commission was substantial. The choice of Charles Crane as the head of the enquiry was also controversial due to his history of anti-Semitism. Hailing from a wealthy background, Charles Crane had no need to earn his livelihood and thus spent his life travelling the four corners of the world. Before becoming infatuated with the Arab world, his mind was caught by the cultural and spiritual riches of Russia. Possessing a strongly partisan character, he vigorously defended Czardom against accusations of anti-Semitism after Cossack-led pogroms and became an enemy of Japan after the Russian-Japanese War. His animosity towards the Jews and the Japanese caused the State Department to cancel his appointment as the US ambassador to China in 1909. This seems only to have increased his negative feelings. He blamed New York's German Jews, and in particular Jacob Schiff, for alienating Americans and Russians from each other because of anti-Jewish pogroms. At the latest by 1910, he became convinced there was a global Jewish-Freemasonry conspiracy and started distributing anti-Semitic literature among his colleagues. Moreover, he believed Jews to be disloyal to the US and ready to disregard its interests in favor of Jewish ones, as he wrote in a letter to President Wilson in 1913.<sup>216</sup> All this should have raised serious questions regarding Crane's aptitude to lead the commission.

However, in 1919, these prejudices seem to have been the very reason pro-Arab circles within the State Department pushed for his selection. Upon its arrival in the Middle East, the investigation operated largely in the echo chamber of anti-Zionist British officers and American missionaries, with Crane noticing widespread fear among the Arabs against what he called "*the modern, pushy Jew*."<sup>217</sup> Unsurprisingly, the commission never seriously considered the realization of the Balfour Declaration, communicating after only a few days that its realization was not feasible. After just six weeks, the commission finished its investigation. Its report recommended that Greater

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 48–49; Robert D. Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (Simon and Schuster, 1995), 70.

<sup>217</sup> Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 70.



Syria be placed under the mandate of the US. The officials to administer this mandate would be drawn from the Protestant educational establishment in the region.<sup>218</sup> The technical experts of the commission, William Yale and George Montgomery, however, dissented. In light of Palestine's Jewish history, anti-Semitic persecution, Muslim fanaticism and the more advanced culture of the Jews vis-à-vis the Arabs they opposed the recommendations of the report.<sup>219</sup> The findings of the King-Crane commission not only reflected the prejudices of its members, but also the tensions within Wilson's Fourteen Points program. The principle of national self-determination, a notion which is never explicitly mentioned in the original, was not easy to fulfill when faced with the national demands of a majority and a minority. Like the Arab nationalists, the Zionists believed that the realization of a Jewish national home in Palestine, their ancient homeland, was in line with this principle, despite the fact that the majority of its future population was yet to immigrate. The King-Crane commission, being praised by anti-Zionists to this day for its allegedly fair treatment of the issue, was no less ideological. It made the conscious decision to prioritize the Arab call for national self-determination over that of the numerous minorities within the area of Greater Syria, including that of the Jews. This did in fact contravene the letter of number twelve of the Fourteen Points, which maintained that *"the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development."*<sup>220</sup> Nor did the Fourteen Points ever suggest that questions of national sovereignty should be decided solely by the majority of the ruled population. Rather, it declared that regarding *"(...) questions of sovereignty(,) the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined."*<sup>221</sup> This was a far stretch from ignoring

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<sup>218</sup> Stuart E. Knee, "The King-Crane Commission of 1919: The Articulation of Political Anti-Zionism," *American Jewish Archives* 29 (1977): 22–53.

<sup>219</sup> Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 144.

<sup>220</sup> "President Wilson's Fourteen Points," *World War I Document Archive*, accessed September 22, 2017, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President\\_Wilson's\\_Fourteen\\_Points](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson's_Fourteen_Points).

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

the interests of the war victors, as the King-Crane commission suggested. After all, it was hardly in the interest of the victor states to create a Greater Syria, the elites of which were overwhelmingly pro-Turkish, just as it had not been in the interest of the war victors to condone the establishment of a Greater Germany by allowing Austria and other majority German territories to join it. Still, the report had no immediate effect. Due to its hostility to French and English plans, the government decided to bury it. It would remain unpublished until 1922.<sup>222</sup> Reflecting America's isolationism post-war, the State Department acted with increasing indifference towards the Middle East.<sup>223</sup> Through their influence in elite circles, the missionary circles were henceforth less concerned with realizing their grand plans in the Middle East than with making sure that the US would not lend any support to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

## 2.2 Arab-American lobbying against Zionism

American Jews and American Protestants were not the only groups who debated the future of the Middle East and Zionism. Quite early on, Arab-Americans also started to voice their opinions on the issue prominently. Nevertheless, Arab-American anti-Zionist activism has remained understated for a long time by historians of the field.<sup>224</sup> The first one to speak out against Zionism was the American-Lebanese man of letters Amin Rihani, whose status among Arab-Americans has been compared to that of Justice Brandeis among American Jews.<sup>225</sup> In September 1917, two months before the Balfour Declaration, Amin Rihani penned an article hostile to Zionism. Rihani, who had come to the US in 1898, had joined the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Disillusioned by their policy towards the Arabs, he had turned to Arab nationalism. In his article, Rihani enumerated several anti-Zionist arguments. Believing Zionism to be primarily a

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<sup>222</sup> Knee, "The King-Crane Commission of 1919."

<sup>223</sup> Frank Edward Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations* (Public Affairs Press, 1949), 254–61.

<sup>224</sup> Davidson, "Debating Palestine," 228–29.

<sup>225</sup> Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008), 372.

religious movement, he feared the creation of a Jewish theocracy. Moreover, the Arabs would not tolerate Jewish domination. Lastly, echoing well-established anti-Zionist arguments from Reform Jews, Zionism would expose Jews to the accusation of dual allegiance.<sup>226</sup> In 1917, Ramallah-born New York surgeon, Fuad Isa Shatara, and N.A. Katibah founded the Palestine Antizionism Society. It was among the organizers of an anti-Zionist rally on November 8, 1918 in Brooklyn. Besides the two founders, the young Lebanese Orientalist Philip Khoury Hitti made an appearance as a speaker at the event. The rally passed a resolution, describing the Arabs at risk of being dominated by *“a race rendered more powerful and wealthy through contact with the western civilization thus applying might against right”* and protesting the *“artificial importation of Zionists flooding the country against its natural capacities and thus forcing an emigration of the rightful inhabitants.”*<sup>227</sup> Thus, by 1918, the anti-Zionist Arab-American movement had already found both its central arguments and its leaders. Rihani, Hitti and Shatara would shape the movement over the next two decades.

The Arab Americans worked to influence the State Department and other influential elements of the foreign policy strata. Fuad Shatara of the Palestine Antizionism Society wrote two letters to Secretary of State Robert Lansing in November 1918 and February 1919, arguing that Zionism was in contravention to Wilson's Fourteen Points.<sup>228</sup> In December 1918, Hitti and George Khairalla established the New Syria National League. The group lobbied for the establishment of a Greater Syria under American protection, reaching from the Sinai to the Euphrates.<sup>229</sup> These groups intensified their activities in light of the upcoming peace conference in Paris. Shatara and Hitti reached out to John Huston Finley, the chief of the Red Cross Commission in Palestine, asking Finley not to detach Palestine from Greater Syria.<sup>230</sup> During the conference, Hitti's New

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<sup>226</sup> Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941*, 201–2.

<sup>227</sup> “Untitled,” *New York Times*, November 9, 1917; cited in Davidson, “Debating Palestine,” 230; see also Knee, “The King-Crane Commission of 1919,” 204.

<sup>228</sup> Davidson, “Debating Palestine,” 231.

<sup>229</sup> *The Formation of Modern Iraq and Syria* (Routledge, 2013), 147.

<sup>230</sup> Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941*, 205.

Syria National League also sent a telegram to Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau advocating an American protectorate over Syria.<sup>231</sup> Abraham Mitrie Ribhany, the author of *'America save the Near East'* (cited above) and a member of both the Palestine Antizionism Society and the New Syria National League, attended the Paris conference. His presence allowed for direct lobbying with the American representatives in Paris and the members of the King-Crane commission. On March 15, he sent a petition on behalf of the New Syria National League to the Americans, which was also read by commission chief Henry C. King. The petition made the case for an American mandate over a Greater Syria because it was the only European country which was *"free from colonial and imperialistic interests."*<sup>232</sup> Self-rule was not at an option at the moment, the petition further stated, *"because of ages of oppression, the people cannot at present assume the responsibilities of complete self-government."*<sup>233</sup> In late May 1919, Ribhany also organized a meeting between the members of the King-Crane commission and a delegation of Palestinians and Syrians, which probably came from the US. They expressed their opposition to Zionism and again pressed for a US mandate over the region. In contrast to the pro-Syrian and anti-Zionist groups, the Zionists neglected the King-Crane commission out of the false belief that it would not even depart for Syria.<sup>234</sup> This was the climate from which the King-Crane commission emerged and under which it operated. Given its own composition, background and exposure to lobbying efforts, it came as little surprise that the King-Crane commission found exactly what it was supposed to, meaning popular support

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<sup>231</sup> *The Formation of Modern Iraq and Syria*, 147.

<sup>232</sup> "The Plan of the 'New Syria National League' for the Future Government of Syria" March 15, 1919, Kings-Crane Commission Digital Collection; cited in Andrew Patrick, *America's Forgotten Middle East Initiative: The King-Crane Commission of 1919* (London: International Library of Twentieth Century History, 2015), 82.

<sup>233</sup> "The Plan of the 'New Syria National League' for the Future Government of Syria"; cited in Patrick, *America's Forgotten Middle East Initiative*, 82.

<sup>234</sup> Patrick, *America's Forgotten Middle East Initiative*, 82; Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941*, 204; Davidson, "Debating Palestine," 230.

among Syrians for an American mandate. While the shelving of the report came as a disappointment, its eventual publication in 1922 was a major success for the Arab-American activists.<sup>235</sup> Although it had no immediate effect, the King-Crane commission's findings remain an orientation point for those who believe that the Zionist project is the source of the disorder and illiberalism which mark the history of the Middle East in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Paris peace conference had energized the pan-Syrian and anti-Zionist segment of the Arab-Americans. In the following years, they showed little activity generally. This reflected the general feeling among Arabs that Zionism had not proved to be the danger they expected it to be; only few Jews immigrated to Palestine in the period up until 1929, hardly upturning the country's demography. Occasionally, they would still participate in the foreign policy debates. On April 21, 1922 Fuad Shatara and the New York attorney Selim Totah testified alongside anti-Zionist Jews in front of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs with regard to the Lodge-Fish resolution.<sup>236</sup> In 1921, the Palestinian National League, the successor organization of the Palestine Antizionism Society, also published the book '*The Case against Zionism*', a collection of anti-Zionist articles by Jewish and Arab-American thinkers. The book ended with a call for "*Palestine not be separated from her neighboring sister states.*"<sup>237</sup> The case of the Arab-Americans was still overwhelmingly pan-Syrian and not in favor of an independent Arab Palestinian state. This focus would only change much later.

### 2.3 The State Department and Zionism

The Balfour Declaration was welcomed by the political leadership of the US, including both the president and Congress, but the State Department reacted with skepticism to it. Secretary of State Robert Lansing advised Wilson not to endorse it, citing as reasons opposition from the Turks and the dividedness among the Jews themselves on the

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<sup>235</sup> Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941*, 210.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>237</sup> Davidson, "Debating Palestine," 232.

issue of Zionism.<sup>238</sup> Moreover, in a letter written in December 1917, Lansing warned that “*many Christian sects and individuals would undoubtedly resent turning the Holy Land over to the absolute control of the race credited with the death of Christ.*”<sup>239</sup> In their assessment of the situation, the State Department and the Protestant missionary circles overlapped. State Department correspondence of the time also reveals the existence of anti-Semitism within its ranks. Many believed that the Zionists were agents of Bolshevism, a theory which was also inspired by the publication and distribution of the English version of the ‘The Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ after World War I.<sup>240</sup> The spread of such conspiracy theories, which experienced mounting popularity during these years, strengthened the anti-Zionist case. To those already disposed towards anti-Semitism, Zionism appeared to be an international Jewish conspiracy. Thus, the contradictory claims that the Jews sought to establish a theocracy in Palestine and that they were communist agents, were often levelled at Zionism simultaneously.<sup>241</sup> US support for Zionism was further undermined by a generally isolationist climate under the three republican presidents who followed Wilson, which limited US foreign involvement.

In the early 1920s, the State Department thus embarked on a course of active opposition to Zionism. In a series of internal memorandums drafted in 1922, NEA chief Allan W. Dulles and Secretary of State Charles Hughes committed the State Department to a policy of non-intervention in Palestine’s affairs and a rejection of Zionist demands. This tendency became obvious during the draft negotiations for the Anglo-American Treaty on Palestine. Against British wishes and seeming US interests as well, the State Department sought to restrict US rights to intercede with the British mandate in Palestine. This was made in order to foreclose US involvement in the country. In addition, it requested the excision of the preamble, citing the Balfour

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<sup>238</sup> Steven L. Spiegel, “Religious Components of U.S. Middle East Policy,” *Journal of International Affairs* 36, no. 2 (1982): 235.

<sup>239</sup> Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations*, 259.

<sup>240</sup> Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 19–20.

<sup>241</sup> Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 1st Printing edition (Hanover: Brandeis, 2003), 64–75.

Declaration. Moreover, US interests were narrowly defined as those of the missionary educational establishment and business interests in the Middle East, not as those of the supporters of Zionism.<sup>242</sup> Already at that time it became clear that the State Department's stance toward Zionism was significantly at odds with that of Congress.

The political organs of the US maintained their support for Zionism. On September 11, 1922, Congress had accepted a joint resolution endorsing the Balfour declaration, which came to be known as the Lodge-Fish resolution after its initiators. The resolution's language was unequivocal: *"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of Christian and all other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, and that the Holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected."*<sup>243</sup> The State Department however sought to downplay the legal bindingness of the resolution in its aftermath.<sup>244</sup> Eventually, the British prevailed in including the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the preamble of the Anglo-American Treaty on Palestine of 1924. Moreover, Article 7 of the treaty afforded the US the right to intercede with the British in the case of a change of the Mandate treaty: *"Nothing contained in the present convention shall be affected by any modification which may be made in the terms of the mandate, as recited above, unless such modification shall have been assented to by the United States."*<sup>245</sup> This article remained an issue of contention. In the opinion of those who advocated a greater US involvement in Palestine, the US had herewith secured a right to intervene with Britain's Palestine policy. This was one of the principal reasons that both Zionists and anti-Zionists regarded the US as a battleground on which to decide the future of Palestine.

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<sup>242</sup> Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations*, 275–80.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–84.

<sup>245</sup> "Convention between the United States and Great Britain in Respect to Rights in Palestine" (1924).

However, the State Department was generally reticent to apply this right, or even acknowledge its existence.

The State Department was convinced that support for Zionism was detrimental to US interests in the region. It was apprised on the situation in Palestine through its Consul in Jerusalem, who tended to have strong opinions on the relevant issues and whose competence was not always beyond doubt. Those who filled the position were usually not well disposed towards Zionism and influenced by the 'Red Scare'. Reverend Otis Glazebrook, who officiated in Jerusalem since 1914, favored the conservation of the Ottoman Empire under an American mandate and rejected Zionism. His stance had influenced the findings of the King-Crane commission.<sup>246</sup> In his reports to Washington, Glazebrook showed little understanding of intra-Zionist dynamics. Probably influenced by the spread of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories after World War I, he believed the moderate Zionist Organization to be a violent, radical Jewish group, hostile to Christianity. A report by his successor Addison E. Southard equally described Eastern European Jewish immigrants as "*potential troublemakers of Bolshevist tendencies*."<sup>247</sup> His successor George C. Cobb showed a more impartial attitude towards Zionism.<sup>248</sup> However, charges that the Zionists were tied to Bolshevism resurfaced with Paul Knabenshue, who acted as consul from 1928 until 1932. In 1929, Arab riots erupted in Palestine and culminated in the massacres of the ancient Orthodox Jewish communities in Hebron and Safed. In total, more than 400 Jews were killed or wounded. The State Department was generally unsympathetic to the Jewish victims of the riots. In his reports, Knabenshue ignored the incitement of the SMC and put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Zionist 'provocateurs'. Moreover, he was of the opinion that the Jews possessed no rights at the Western Wall.<sup>249</sup> American reticence to appear pro-Zionist was also motivated by the fear that such an impression would compromise US interests in the region, which were never defined as including the

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<sup>246</sup> Knee, "The King-Crane Commission of 1919," 40–41.

<sup>247</sup> Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations*, 291–93.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>249</sup> Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Brandeis University Press, 2015), 22–29.



interests of American Jews. Thus, Knabenshue closely monitored Arabic newspapers, highlighting those articles which were critical of US-Zionist collaboration in his correspondence with Washington.<sup>250</sup> The anti-Zionist stance of the State Department was strengthened by the reports authored by the Shaw and the Hope-Simpson commissions, which were published in 1930. These reports investigated the reasons behind the riots. Both ascribed the responsibility for the riots largely to the Zionist policy in Palestine. They were especially critical towards the effects of the acquisition of Arab land and Jewish immigration. The findings therefore recommended a revision of the British policy towards Zionism, suggesting limiting Jewish land acquisition and immigration.<sup>251</sup> These suggestions were in line with the thinking in the State Department. The riots in Palestine also had a great effect on public opinion towards Zionism in the US.

#### 2.4 The 1929 riots and the ascendancy of anti-Zionism

Anti-Zionism in the US gained traction after the riots in Palestine of 1929, which had culminated in the massacres of Orthodox Jewish communities in Hebron and Safed. This was an unexpected outcome, as six American Jews were among the victims of the massacre. Initial public outrage was, however, short-lived and soon the critics of Zionism gained the upper hand. They felt that the events vindicated their arguments about the impracticability of the Zionist enterprise.<sup>252</sup> The Arab-American activists sought to present the violence, which was largely directed at Orthodox Jews, as an unfortunate, but understandable reaction to Zionism and to the British support for it. In this effort, the Palestinian National League joined hands with two other Arab-American organizations, the New Syria Party and the American branch of the Islamist Young Men's Moslem Association. In August 1929, the alliance protested the press coverage of the riots. Moreover, a delegation of the three groups, including Amin Rihani and

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<sup>250</sup> Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 43.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 12–13; Great Britain, Special Mission to Palestine, and John Hope Simpson, *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1930).

<sup>252</sup> Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 76.

Peter S. George, met with Secretary of State Henry Stimson and the British ambassador Esme Howard to press their view that Zionism was responsible for the violence. In contrast to the Arab national leadership in Palestine, they emphasized that this was a “*conflict between the Arab nationalism of the native majority and the Zionism of a small minority of foreign Jews*,” which had nothing to do with religion.<sup>253</sup> However, the sincerity of these statements was questionable. The riots had been primarily motivated by the warning of a takeover of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem by the Jews, as detailed in Chapter One. Moreover, most of the victims were Orthodox Jews from the Old Yishuv; that is, Jews who had lived in Ottoman Palestine prior to the first wave of Eastern European Jewish immigration in the 1880s.

In December 1929, Arab-Americans established another group, the Friends of Palestine Arabs in the New York office of Selim Totah to launch a propaganda campaign against Zionism. Amin Rihani acted as one of the organization’s chief propagandists, touring the United States in 1929 and 1930. Appealing to the then preponderant isolationist feeling, he warned in an article in the progressive newspaper the *Nation* in October 1929 that the US might be drawn into a Pan-Islamic revolt provoked by the Zionists. Rihani also debated with Zionist activists like Jacob de Haas on several occasions. Witnesses to the debates noted that de Haas was no match for the gifted orator Rihani who, at one point, called for the burning of the Balfour Declaration. One observer remarked that she had never seen “*anti-Semitism in mass*” like during such a debate.<sup>254</sup> The Arab-American anti-Zionist campaign was seconded by the political leadership of the Arabs in Palestine. In early January of 1930, the SMC and the Arab Executive sent two delegations to the US and to Britain to promote the Arab Cause. The delegation to the US consisted of the Syrian pan-Islamic activist

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<sup>253</sup> “Untitled,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1929; cited in Davidson, “Debating Palestine,” 234–35.

<sup>254</sup> Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind, 1917-1941*, 212–13; Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 92–93; “Friends of Palestine Arabs’ Conducting Anti-Zionist Campaign in United States,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 30, 1929, <http://www.jta.org/1929/12/30/archive/friends-of-palestine-arabs-conducting-anti-zionist-campaign-in-united-states>.

Shakib Arslan, his brother Adel Arslan, Issa Bandak and three other members. In the US, the delegation met with the State Department, arguing that only the abolition of the Balfour Declaration could lead to a reconciliation between Jews and Arabs. The delegation also appealed to the Arab-Americans to “*emulate the American Jews*” by giving donations to the SMC. However, the undertaking was reportedly a financial disaster.<sup>255</sup> This may explain why there were no further Arab delegations from Palestine during the next seven years.

In the post-1929 debate, many progressive and liberal newspapers, which had welcomed the Balfour Declaration in 1917, switched their allegiance and joined the anti-Zionist camp. The most famous example is that of journalist Vincent Sheean, who, after travelling to Palestine with the support of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), became an anti-Zionist activist. According to his own account, a meeting with George Antonius caused the change of opinion. The loss of the liberal press, which had been a traditional ally to Jewish causes, was a bitter setback for the Zionist movement in America.<sup>256</sup> The anti-Zionist cause was further bolstered by the non-dispensationalist Protestant media. The non-denominational Protestant newspaper *Christian Century* was one of the main forums to discuss contemporary issues affecting mainline Protestantism, including Zionism in the period from the 1920s until the 40s.<sup>257</sup> Its editorial attitude towards Zionism tended to be negative and opposition to Zionism was often expressed in unequivocal terms. This was also the case after the 1929 riots. Harvard philosophy professor William E. Hocking, one of the most prolific anti-Zionist writers of the time, put the blame for the explosion of violence squarely on the Jews. He attacked the foundation of Zionism by questioning the historical Jewish identity of the Land of Israel: “*Palestine does not belong to the Jews. It does not belong to them*

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<sup>255</sup> “Arabs Sending Delegations to England and America”; “Arab-Christian Quits American Delegation”; “Urge Arabs Here to Buy Palestine Lands”; “Arab Delegation to U.S. Made Financial Failure, Bendak Says”; Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 202; Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 120.

<sup>256</sup> Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 81–82; Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 100–102.

<sup>257</sup> Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 13.

on historical grounds. They had full possession of it for less than five hundred years. The Jews were not driven out of Palestine by the destruction of Jerusalem and Titus. Their dispersion for several hundred years had been a voluntary diaspora.”<sup>258</sup> These were of course questionable historical assertions, which ignored the fact that Palestine had been under the rule of foreign empires for most of the time since the Roman conquest, and that the Jews could hardly be considered to have exerted full control over their country or their destiny. However, such claims were reflective of a larger Protestant bias against Zionism. In the wake of the riots, the British Colonial Office decided to limit Jewish immigration and land sales.<sup>259</sup> Another author of the *Christian Century* welcomed this decision, which in its view had put an end to the Balfour Declaration, “a mischievous and ambiguous promise”, which had infringed on the rights of the non-Jewish inhabitants of the country.<sup>260</sup> The reaction to the pogroms of 1929 proved that anti-Zionism had strong support in many US circles.

The 1929 riots met the Zionists in a moment of weakness. The membership of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) had been decreasing constantly during the 1920s. Its membership only numbered 18’000 in 1929, a mere tenth of the membership number in 1919.<sup>261</sup> The Zionists and the non-Zionists, the latter being Jewish groups who were committed to building a Jewish home in Palestine while not sharing Zionist ideology, were unwilling and unable to mount an effective counter measure, with the result that American Zionism was significantly weakened.<sup>262</sup> Moreover, the Zionists themselves were divided on the right strategy to take. Weizmann’s unwavering loyalty to England forced his American colleagues to distinguish between the anti-Zionist

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<sup>258</sup> William Ernest Hocking, “Misconceptions about Palestine,” *Christian Century*, July 1936, 930–32; cited in Aaron Berman, *Nazism, the Jews, and American Zionism, 1933-1948* (Wayne State University Press, 1992), 48.

<sup>259</sup> For a deeper analysis of the Arab riots and their consequences for the Arab-Jewish conflict, see Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929*.

<sup>260</sup> Paul C. Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948* (Routledge, 2012), 115.

<sup>261</sup> Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 57.

<sup>262</sup> Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 88–91.

mandatory government and the supposedly friendly British government, an analysis which was difficult to communicate to the public.<sup>263</sup> To further complicate the matter, the initiative of Judah Magnes led to confusion among the supporters of Zionism. Magnes, the Chancellor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, publicly called for a binational state in November 1929. Without a mandate from the Jewish Agency, he entered into negotiations with the Mufti, thereby angering the Zionist leadership.<sup>264</sup> Pierre van Passen, a famous journalist and sympathizer of Zionism, summarized the American Zionists' failure in the following observations: "*We saw before our very eyes how the great wave of moral indignation which swept America (...) was not seized and held and that instead public opinion was dangerously allowed to swing (...) in a totally different direction.*"<sup>265</sup> Another Zionist activist, Emanuel Neumann of the Zionist Organization of America, wrote bitterly in 1932: "*In the end, we who were the victims of an organized and murderous assault [that is, the recent Arab riots], found ourselves depicted as the aggressors. To add to our distress, it was the liberals who took the lead in placing such a construction upon the situation. We were betrayed, as it were, in the house of our friends.*"<sup>266</sup> Would they be better prepared next time?

The debate in 1929 clearly showed that anti-Zionism was a popular conviction among non-evangelical, mainline Protestants. Protestant anti-Zionism was a complex phenomenon with several causes. Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the teachings of Dispensationalism, which originated in England, had gained popularity in the US and permeated different denominations. Dispensationalism rejected the notion that Christendom, the 'new Israel' had replaced the Jews or 'the old Israel' as God's chosen people. In dispensationalist theology, both peoples had to fulfill their distinctive purposes.<sup>267</sup> Dispensationalism thus affirmed Jewish peoplehood and preached the

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<sup>263</sup> Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 62.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 72–82.

<sup>265</sup> Pierre Van Paassen, "Letter to Samuel Wise," August 29, 1930, CZA A243/92; cited in Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 94.

<sup>266</sup> Emanuel Neumann, "Mobilizing American Opinion for Palestine," *Opinion*, February 1, 1932; cited in Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948*, 103.

<sup>267</sup> Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 18–19.

millenarian belief of a return of the Jews to the Land of Israel. This concept was alien to mainline Protestants. A *Christian Century* article titled 'What is Palestine's future?' which appeared in 1929 argued against a literal reading of the biblical sources in favor of Jewish nationhood. It stated, "*it is the conviction of most modern biblical scholars that the Old Testament contains no anticipation of the restoration of Israel to its ancient homeland which can apply to the Jewish people in the present age.*"<sup>268</sup> Mainline Protestantism's rejection of dispensationalism seems to have affected their stance towards a Jewish collective identity – or vice versa. The *Christian Century* criticized the American Jewish community for conserving their culture, for their intra-group solidarity and for their particularistic religion, which they contrasted with Christianity's universalistic message. As Fishman notes, this critique was reserved exclusively for the Jews, while other minority communities in the US, like Black Americans, were not subjected to it, thus revealing a double standard. By maintaining the traits of their Jewish identity, the *Christian Century* theorized that the Jews were fostering Anti-Semitism. Consequently, it warned menacingly that the Protestant "*spirit of tolerance*" may also eventually come to an end.<sup>269</sup> In line with some Reform Rabbis, many mainline Protestants claimed that there was no Jewish people and that the Jews were solely defined by their adherence to Judaism. Following this thought to its logical conclusion, there was no basis for Jewish nationalism, meaning Zionism.

The rejection of Jewish nationalism was grounded in traditional theological reflections. In May 1933, no more than two months after the National Socialists had come to power in Germany, the article 'Jews and Jesus' appeared in the *Christian Century*. Its author was Charles C. Morrison, the journal's editor. The article was a damning critique of Jewish nationalism and drew clear parallels between biblical times and the present day of 1933. Although he opined that individual Jews were not responsible for the death of Jesus, Jewish leadership was. It had crucified Jesus because his message of universalism threatened their nationalism and power. "*It was nationalism that crucified*

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<sup>268</sup> "What Is Palestine's Future?," *Christian Century*, December 11, 1929, 1535; cited in Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 9.

<sup>269</sup> Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 33.

*Jesus*,” the article concluded.<sup>270</sup> This represented an update of the Christian decide view. By crucifying Jesus, Jews had not only forfeited their right to be God’s people, but also their claim to the Land of Israel. This marked a clear transition from Christian anti-Semitism to Christian anti-Zionism. Such opposition to Jewish nationalism was expressed in increasingly vitriolic and hysteric terms. In 1945, the magazine compared National-Socialism to Judaism, suggesting that both shared “*an ideology of a unique and privileged race*”, provoking criticism from its readers.<sup>271</sup> Such shrill, disproportionate criticism of Jewish nationalism suggests that a deeper, hostile attitude towards Jews lay at the heart of much Protestant critique.

Opposition to Zionism had a strong voice, but not the only one within US mainline Protestantism during the period discussed here. Because of their failure to adequately respond to the 1929 riots in Palestine and the loss of liberal sympathy, American Zionists realized the need to build alliances with Christian Zionists. The American Zionist official Emanuel Neuman was instrumental in establishing the American Palestine Committee in 1932. Another group, the Pro-Palestine Federation, had already been formed in 1930 and assembled a list of prominent Christian supporters of Zionism. It defined its task as mainstreaming Zionism among non-evangelical Protestants also. Recruiting Christian public opinion to influence the Roosevelt government was more imperative than ever – especially after 1936: Only the US government possessed the capacity to pressure Britain to abandon its restrictive immigration quotas and thus save European Jewry from its increasing predicament. However, the majority of the Zionist leaders were liberals or even, like the rabbi Stephen Wise, socialists. They therefore unanimously supported the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. This partisanship robbed the Zionists of leverage to influence the new administration in a pro-Zionist direction. Moreover, there are indications that the Zionists neglected Christian Zionists after Roosevelt’s election and showed no inclination to support them meaningfully. The ZOA officials also did not get

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<sup>270</sup> Charles C. Morrison, “Jews and Jesus,” *Christian Century*, May 3, 1933, 582–84; cited in Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 9.

<sup>271</sup> “Untitled,” *Christian Century*, June 13, 1945, 702; cited in Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 37.

along with the Jewish secretary of the Pro-Palestine Federation. This all contributed to the political failure of American Zionism in this decade.<sup>272</sup> Still, despite the Zionists' many strategic and organizational mistakes, Zionism gained new supporters during the 1930s. Persecution of Jewry by Nazi-Germany pushed many Protestants to adopt a more pro-Jewish stance in the following years, especially after the horrors of the Holocaust became known to the American public. Even some committed anti-Semites now softened their opinions about Jews.

Despite the wave of anti-Semitic horrors, opposition against Zionism remained strong among mainline Protestants throughout the 1930s and 40s. The anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism led by Elmer Berger worked to co-opt this stance. In 1944, it sent an editorial, which drew attention to the existence of anti-Zionist Jews and argued that Zionism stood in contrast to American Judaism, to several hundred Christian clergymen and educators. Their responses, at least those which affirmed the content of the editorial, were then published in the pamphlet 'Christian opinion on Jewish Nationalism and a Jewish State'.<sup>273</sup> Criticism of Zionism continued to appear not only in the *Christian Century*, but in other Protestant newspapers as well. Although there were many Zionists within the church, at no point did Christian Zionism dominate the debate and no official church body ever endorsed a Zionist position. In general, the Protestant press was also markedly less enthusiastic about Israel than the secular press.<sup>274</sup> Some mainline Protestants opposed to Zionism joined Virginia Gildersleeve and Kermit Roosevelt's Committee for Justice and Peace in Palestine, which was established in 1948.<sup>275</sup> Protestant anti-Zionists proved to be among the fiercest opponents of the establishment of a Jewish state until the establishment of Israel and even thereafter, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.

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<sup>272</sup> Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948*, 100–116.

<sup>273</sup> Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 31–33.

<sup>274</sup> William L. Burton, "Protestant America and the Rebirth of Israel," *Jewish Social Studies*, 1964, 214.

<sup>275</sup> Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 31–33.



## 2.5 George Antonius, Philip Hitti and the American Campus

In the 1930s, anti-Zionist activists had a firm base at the country's universities. The world of universities was dominated by the same Protestant elites who staffed the State Department. These elites were often wary of the Jewish newcomers. Unsurprisingly, universities proved to be fertile soil for anti-Zionist and pro-Arab sentiments. Many of the high profile non-Arab anti-Zionist activists, like William Hocking or Virginia Gildersleeve, occupied leading positions in institutes of higher learning. Not incidentally, both were accused at some point of harboring pro-German and pro-fascist sympathies.<sup>276</sup> This atmosphere and the rise of the nascent field of Middle Eastern studies provided an excellent opportunity for the politically-minded, young, ambitious scholars Philipp Hitti and George Antonius to advance their careers and to share their view points with colleagues and students.

George Antonius is still remembered today as the author of the seminal '*The Arab Awakening*', the first comprehensive work on the history of Arab nationalism. Antonius was born to Christian Orthodox parents in Lebanon in 1891 and had worked as a public servant for the British administration's Department of Education in Palestine. Until his early death in 1941, he was one of the most energetic and prolific pro-Arab propagandists, enjoying a large following in England and the US. Since at least 1930, George Antonius was sponsored by Charles Crane.<sup>277</sup> Antonius thanked him by putting the dedication "*To Charles R. Crane, aptly nicknamed Harun al-Rashid, affectionately*" at the front of his main work '*The Arab Awakening*'.<sup>278</sup> The two had probably met first at one of the dinner parties which George Antonius and his wife regularly hosted for prominent members of the Jerusalem society in the early 1920s, thus laying the

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<sup>276</sup> Donald M. Gillmor, "Who Was W. E. Hocking?," *Communication Law and Policy* 3, no. 2 (March 1, 1998): 231–46, doi:10.1080/10811689809368648.

<sup>277</sup> Norman E. Saul, *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858–1939: American Businessman, Philanthropist, and a Founder of Russian Studies in America* (Lexington Books, 2012), 271.

<sup>278</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement. [With Maps.]*.

foundation for a lasting cooperation.<sup>279</sup> Given their close relationship, it is worth it to take a closer look at Crane's activities since his participation in the King-Crane commission in 1919. During the following years, Crane widely traveled the Arab world, where he was often received as a hero. At one point, he was suspected of financing an insurrection against French rule in Syria. Crane saw the Zionist project in Palestine within the context of the global Jewish conspiracy, which, he believed, had fought a campaign against religion for 2000 years. Such views easily dovetailed with the conspiracy theory of a 'Jewish war against Islam'. In 1931, Crane met with the Saudi King, intimating to him that the Jews did in fact control Soviet Russia. The Saudi ruler responded that he entertained similar ideas. To fight this alleged Jewish conspiracy, Crane envisaged an alliance between Islam and Catholicism. To this end, he set up a Muslim Committee in Cairo in 1933 and met with Cardinal Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, who expressed interest in the idea. He also sought to include the Mufti whom he had met in the same year in the alliance.<sup>280</sup> According to the Israeli historian Menahem Kaufmann, these schemes were pursued until 1934, with his protégé George Antonius acting as the Mufti's liaison in the negotiations with the Catholic Church.<sup>281</sup> In contrast to the man who financed him, George Antonius strove to maintain an academic and neutral outlook.

Antonius enjoyed excellent relations with American diplomats and institutions. Thus, Antonius served as a source and expert on the Arab world and the Palestinian Arab leadership for the State Department's Near East Division.<sup>282</sup> He also maintained contact with anti-Zionist activists in the US, such as the famous war reporter Vincent

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<sup>279</sup> Susan Silsby Boyle, *Betrayal Of Palestine: The Story Of George Antonius* (Westview Press, 2001), 145–46.

<sup>280</sup> Brecher, "Charles R. Crane's Crusade for the Arabs, 1919–39," 44–47; Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 70–71.

<sup>281</sup> Menahem Kaufman, "George Antonius and American Universities: Dissemination of the Mufti of Jerusalem's Anti-Zionist Propaganda 1930–1936," *American Jewish History* 75, no. 4 (1986): 387.

<sup>282</sup> Menahem Kaufman, "George Antonius ve arzot ha-brit," in *Ijyunim be-jahadut zemanenu*, 1984, 24–25.

Sheean. Sheean credited George Antonius for his own conversion to anti-Zionism after visiting him on a tour to Palestine. Sheean subsequently introduced Antonius to Charles Merz, a journalist for the *New York Times*.<sup>283</sup> In 1930, George Antonius received a permanent stipend from Crane's Institute of Current World Affairs in New York, which allowed him to dedicate the rest of his life to the cause of Arab nationalism and to write the history of the movement, an idea which Charles Crane had suggested.<sup>284</sup> In 1930, Crane invited Antonius to visit the US. In March, he was received by NEA chief Wallace Murray.<sup>285</sup> During his stay, Antonius contemplated starting a lecture tour of US campuses with the support of Princeton professor Philip Hitti, which however did not materialize.<sup>286</sup> Nevertheless, Hitti would certainly have been the right choice to help him promote pro-Arab narratives at the American campus.

The Orientalist Philip Hitti was the paragon of an activist scholar. Both through his scholarly work and his political activities, he helped to raise awareness for Arab cultural achievements and promote the Arab cause. Born in Lebanon in 1886 to a Maronite family, he was a scion of the educational system established by American Protestants. After graduating from the Syrian Protestant College in 1908, he moved to the US, where he received a PhD from Columbia University in 1915. Subsequently, he returned to Lebanon to teach Oriental history at the Syrian Protestant College.<sup>287</sup> Since 1917, Hitti had been involved in anti-Zionist Arab-American groups, as mentioned above.<sup>288</sup> In 1926, Philipp Hitti was chosen to chair the new Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures at Princeton University. In this function, he criticized what was in his opinion a focus of Oriental departments on Hebrew studies and ancient history at the

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 37–38.

<sup>284</sup> Saul, *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858–1939*, 215; *ibid.*, 271.

<sup>285</sup> Cohen, *The Year After the Riots*, 44.

<sup>286</sup> Kaufman, "George Antonius and American Universities," 388; Kaufman, "George Antonius ve arzot ha-brit," 37.

<sup>287</sup> Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 163–64.

<sup>288</sup> Davidson, "Debating Palestine," 230.

expense of Arabic and Islamic Studies.<sup>289</sup> *“The more I became aware of this general blind spot in the American curriculum the more I was determined to find a remedy,”* Hitti wrote in his unpublished autobiography.<sup>290</sup> He ascribed American indifference towards the Middle East to a deep-rooted enmity for Islam in American culture: *“Americans had inherited from Europe a measure of political and religious prejudice against Islam, the only medieval religion which vied with Christianity and conquered it on all fronts: western Asia, western Europe, northern Africa, and south-western Europe.”*<sup>291</sup> Such statements suggest that Hitti’s unease over the presence of Hebrew studies and ancient history at Oriental departments sprang not only from academic considerations, but had its source rather in his world view. Both Hebrew studies and biblical archeology had little to say about the Arabs, but confirmed the Jewish historical memory, underlining their rootedness in Palestine. To the dismay of anti-Zionists, Bible-versed Americans tended to consider the Jews to be the *“descendants (and rightful heirs) of the ancient biblical occupants of Palestine.”*<sup>292</sup> This ran counter to the anti-Zionist historical narrative, epitomized by Hitti, which portrayed and continues to portray the Jews as outsiders with a limited connection to the Land of Israel. Hitti’s efforts to push the field of Oriental studies in a different direction and create a counter narrative were crowned with success. Princeton significantly extended its Arabic studies program with its courses underlining *“the significance of Arabia as the probable cradle of the Semites, and the importance of the Arabians as representatives of the Semitic race.”*<sup>293</sup> Hitti also began to offer courses in Arab history, although he had never received any training in the field. Many students from abroad would study under Hitti. His first PhD student was the eminent Syrian intellectual and politician Constantine K.

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<sup>289</sup> Kaufman, “George Antonius and American Universities,” 388.

<sup>290</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti, “From Lebanon to Princeton - Unpublished Autobiography” 1972, 66, PHP 21.2.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>292</sup> Davidson, “Debating Palestine,” 231.

<sup>293</sup> “Summer Seminar in Arabic and Islamic Studies” July 20, 1935, ISA AT/250-130; cited in Kaufman, “George Antonius and American Universities,” 389.

Zurayk, one of the most influential thinkers of Arab nationalism.<sup>294</sup> Hitti's scholarship marked nothing less than a paradigm shift in Oriental studies.

Antonius did not visit the US again until five years later in 1935. Living on Crane's stipend, he sought to maintain the appearance of a neutral observer during this period. Thus, he refrained from participating in discussions on the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine on the side of the Arabs. This changed in 1935, when he planned to conduct a lecture tour of US and Canadian universities, which also relied on the Protestant anti-Zionist network. During his preparations, Antonius was contacted by William E. Hocking to help draft a lecture on the situation in Palestine from the Arab point of view.<sup>295</sup> His tour, which started in March, included lectures at Princeton, Harvard, the University of Chicago and the Brookings Institute as well as an informal meeting at the Council of Foreign Relations. To his audience, he was presented as a renowned scholar of the Middle East rather than as a partisan activist.<sup>296</sup> In Princeton, Antonius called for the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and a redefinition of the mandate in the sense that its mission be defined as stopping Zionism and promoting the independence of Palestine, which was almost exactly the opposite of its original aim. Antonius also visited Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. During the lecture tour, Antonius met with leading figures from the world of journalism and politics as well as old friends like Charles Merz from the *New York Times*, who read a first draft of his '*The Arab Awakening*' and found it to be to his liking. His contacts at the State Department even arranged for a meeting with President Roosevelt, which took place on May 1, 1935. His stay in the US was not dedicated solely to the dissemination of information, but also to research for his upcoming book. Through NEA chief, Wallace Murray, Antonius gained access to confidential material regarding the subject matter.<sup>297</sup> Already then, it was clear that Antonius had never planned for '*The Arab Awakening*' to be a purely scholarly work. In letters to his American friends, he let them know that it was also

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<sup>294</sup> Samir Seikaly, "Constantine Zurayk: Beginnings, 1931–1939," in *One Hundred and Fifty* (Beirut: Amercian University of Beirut, 2016), 295.

<sup>295</sup> Boyle, *Betrayal Of Palestine*, 203.

<sup>296</sup> Kaufman, "George Antonius and American Universities," 389–92.

<sup>297</sup> Boyle, *Betrayal Of Palestine*, 217–20.

meant to serve the Arab Cause.<sup>298</sup> In this sense, it would fulfill its mission beyond all expectations.

Impressed with the success of his 1935 tour, Antonius suggested in a letter to his sponsor, Crane's Institute of Current World Affairs, that he should continue the pro-Arab campaign in the US, a suggestion Charles Crane took up readily. The first step was to provide George Antonius with a regular academic position at a US university. An opportunity arrived in May 1936 when Richard Gottheil, professor for Semitic languages at Columbia University and a prominent Zionist leader, died. Charles Crane proposed Antonius for filling the vacant position. While not hiring him on a permanent basis, the university agreed to employ Antonius as a guest lecturer for the period of one year. This led to a public outcry. Richard Gottheil's widow Emma called Antonius an anti-Semite and a propagandist, accusing him of being responsible for inciting violence against Jewish civilians in Palestine. Jewish leaders informed Columbia on Antonius' close connection to the Mufti. They were seconded by scholars like professors William F. Albright and James Montgomery, who asserted that Antonius was a propagandist and lacked adequate academic education. The campaign led to the cancellation of Antonius' appointment, with Columbia accusing Crane and his Institute of Current World Affairs of having deceived them regarding Antonius' aptitude for the post. The latter defended themselves by pointing to academics and institutions which supported Antonius' appointment, like the AUB.<sup>299</sup> George Antonius would never hold an academic position.

In March 1937, George Antonius visited Rome and England. From there, he travelled to Canada and the United States, where he stayed for two months, giving lectures and attending numerous meetings. Despite his recent scandal, he also visited Columbia University, where he repeatedly met with faculty members of the Department of History. In June 1937, he left for England after securing a book deal for his upcoming publication '*The Arab Awakening*'.<sup>300</sup> George Antonius would travel to the US another two times until 1939, the year of Charles Crane's death. However, with the Mufti fleeing

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<sup>298</sup> Kaufman, "George Antonius ve arzot ha-brit," 23.

<sup>299</sup> Kaufman, "George Antonius and American Universities," 392–95.

<sup>300</sup> Boyle, *Betrayal Of Palestine*, 255.

to Berlin and openly associating himself with the Axis powers, George Antonius was discredited. On the urging of the State Department, the Institute of Current World Affairs cancelled its stipend shortly before Antonius' death in 1942.<sup>301</sup> Like in the case of Philip Hitti, the background to Antonius' work is nowadays largely forgotten or ignored, while his '*The Arab Awakening*' has become one of the founding texts of the modern field of Middle Eastern studies.

## 2.6 The Society of the 'American Friends of the Arabs'

While Arab-Americans had established their first anti-Zionist groups immediately after the Balfour Declaration, Protestant anti-Zionism remained unorganized until the late 1930s. In early 1937, former AUB professor Harry Roscoe Snyder (1906-1988) and the Oriental scholar Elihu Grant decided to establish an informal association that would be friendly to the Arab Cause and opposed to Zionism. The organization, which originally had no name, assumed the name 'American Friends of the Arabs' (AFA) in 1938. Snyder, Grant and the philosopher William E. Hocking, the author of several anti-Zionist articles in the Protestant press, as mentioned above, formed the executive board. From the beginning, Fuad Shatara and Habib Katibah from the Arab National League (ANL) were also intimately involved in the endeavor. During its two-year existence, the organization sought to coordinate the anti-Zionist efforts with the Arab National League and lobby the administration against taking sides with the Zionist cause. The organization helped to build a long-lived network of opponents of Zionism, which would outlast the creation of Israel in 1948.

The leading figure behind the organization was Harry Snyder, a young activist, who had served as Methodist minister from 1925 until 1927 and as an adjunct professor at the AUB from 1927 until 1929.<sup>302</sup> Of the two, Elihu Grant, a well-known biblical scholar and archeologist, was certainly the more prominent, although it was Snyder who largely directed the business of the nascent organization. Both Snyder and Grant shared a Methodist missionary background. After his ordination as a Methodist priest in 1900,

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<sup>301</sup> Kaufman, "George Antonius and American Universities," 395–96.

<sup>302</sup> "Inventory of the Harry Roscoe Snyder Papers," 2011, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt596nf1pt/>.

Grant went to the Ottoman Empire to work as a superintendent at the American Friends School in Ramallah and Jerusalem from 1901 until 1904.<sup>303</sup> Here he met the young Khalil Totah, whose career he encouraged, becoming his mentor. Khalil Totah would also later become the director of the American Friends School in Ramallah and upon his return to the US, a pro-Arab activist for the Institute of Arab American Affairs, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.<sup>304</sup> Upon his return to the US in 1904, Grant taught biblical literature first at Smith College and then from 1917 at Haverford college until his retirement in 1937. In 1928, he returned to Palestine to conduct excavations in Beit Shemesh. However, Grant's interest in the Middle East transcended scholarly interest and he became an advocate for Arab interests, in particular in Palestine.<sup>305</sup>

In the beginning, the form of the new group was unclear. The question whether to form a small elite group or an organization with a more public appeal stood at the center of the deliberations between the group's core members: Snyder, Grant and the ANL's Fuad Shatara.<sup>306</sup> William Hocking also raised concerns about the character of the group, expressing that it was "*neither necessary nor desirable that a pro-Arab propaganda group should be formed; such a group would antagonize and be antagonized.*"<sup>307</sup> Instead, he advocated a non-polemical approach. Nevertheless, he later joined the executive board of the association.<sup>308</sup> As a result of these discussions, the association was planned as an informal body with little public profile, which sought to organize and coordinate pro-Arab sentiment within the American elite. For this purpose, Snyder intended to send a regular circular letter to personalities supposedly friendly to the Arabs ranging over the entire country. Habib Katibah helped Snyder to create a list of recipients. Names were collected through different means, including

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<sup>303</sup> G. Ernest Wright, W. F. Albright, and John W. Flight, "Elihu Grant," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 88 (1942): 2.

<sup>304</sup> Colin Rutherford, "The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah" (Master Thesis, 2010).

<sup>305</sup> Wright, Albright, and Flight, "Elihu Grant," 2–3.

<sup>306</sup> Harry R. Snyder, "Letter to William E. Hocking," April 29, 1937, HRSP 9.21.

<sup>307</sup> William Ernest Hocking, "Letter to Harry Snyder," April 30, 1937, HRSP 9.7.

<sup>308</sup> Harry R. Snyder, "Letter to Mr. Holmes," February 8, 1939, HRSP 9.8.



scouring the lists of non-partisan organizations dealing with the Middle East or during the speaking tours of Amin Rihani and Fuad Shatara.<sup>309</sup> This collaboration underlined that the AFA was a joint project of anti-Zionist Arab-Americans and Protestants.

The first AFA newsletter stated that there was a general problem with the perception of the Arabs in the US. The letter lamented not only the *“profound ignorance of the Arab, (...), but also the suspicion, distrust, and prejudice that exists and is being nurtured in this country.”*<sup>310</sup> With a touch of self-criticism, the letter noted: *“Perhaps those of us who know the Arab more intimately have failed to do our part to help our fellow American understand him. Certainly we have neglected to coordinate our efforts to this end.”*<sup>311</sup> Calling on a feeling of patriotism, the letter compared the Arab Cause and American Exceptionalism, maintaining that the Arab *“struggle for liberty and equality (...) is following in the footsteps of our forefathers. (...) Perhaps this may explain the respect and admiration the Arab holds for the American.”*<sup>312</sup> The letter drafted a program on how to raise sympathy for the Arab Cause in the US, mentioning the spread of information, the holding of events and the coordination of activities which sought to portray the Arab political life and culture in a favorable light.<sup>313</sup> Most of the answers to the newsletter were positive. Many of those who chose to join belonged to the missionary Protestant groups most associated with anti-Zionism at the time. Among those were such influential figures as Stephen B.L. Penrose, the future president of the AUB, or William W. Eddy and Halford L. Hoskins, who in their later function as State Department officials for the Middle East supported its anti-Zionist policy. Hoskins was particularly enthusiastic about the initiative and offered to

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<sup>309</sup> Habiba Katibah, “Letter to Harry Snyder,” March 1, 1937, HRSP 9.12; Habiba Katibah, “Letter to Harry Snyder,” March 9, 1937, HRSP 9.12; Habiba Katibah, “Letter to Harry Snyder,” May 11, 1937, HRSP 9.12.

<sup>310</sup> Harry R. Snyder, “First Newsletter,” 1937, HRSP 9.34.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

collaborate in it.<sup>314</sup> Others sympathized with the endeavor but chose to abstain. Daniel Bliss did so in order not to “*embarrass the University, (...which) has to keep a neutral position.*”<sup>315</sup> In sum, the responses clearly showed that there was a demand for a mainstream pro-Arab, anti-Zionist organization, which did not only appeal to Arab-Americans but to a broader segment of the population.

Few of the answers were also anti-Semitic and a small number of persons declined. The Orientalist and later head of the AUB Stephen ‘Bikes’ Penrose, then working at Whitman College, who entertained friendly relations with Snyder, immediately accepted. However, Penrose raised some concerns about the character of the new organization. He was fearful of alienating the Jewish population: “*I do feel that considerable diplomacy would be necessary in presenting our intentions publicly. It is one thing to admire and seek to foster Arabian traditions of culture, but it is another to appear to back them politically against the encroachment of the Zionism. I would make a perfectly well friend of the Arab if it did not necessarily involve my becoming an enemy of the Jew. If you can assure me that the letter would not be an implication of the former, all of my doubts would be set at rest. Do not feel, I beg you, that I am pro-Jewish or anti-Nordic, or anything of the sort. I simply feel that it is not wise to antagonize a group of people who have themselves a considerable cultural tradition, and who are not all as black as they are painted.*”<sup>316</sup> In his response, Snyder addressed these concerns, stating that being pro-Arab does not imply being anti-Jewish and that he wished to convince the Jews in a non-partisan fashion. Still, he argued that it was “*impossible to divorce a cultural renaissance from its political aspects (...)*”, implying that the Arab cultural renaissance was incompatible with Zionism.<sup>317</sup> Despite Snyder’s assertions, anti-Semitism remained an issue for the organization during the whole course of its existence. In the second newsletter sent in November 1937, Snyder mentioned the receipt of letters from sympathizers who wished to turn the pro-Arab body into an anti-Semitic organization. He rejected these demands, without

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<sup>314</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, “Letter to Harry Snyder,” May 24, 1937, HRSP 9.8.

<sup>315</sup> Daniel L. Bliss, “Letter to Harry Snyder,” February 11, 1939, HRSP 8.16.

<sup>316</sup> Stephen Penrose, “Letter to Harry Snyder,” May 25, 1937, HRSP 9.21.

<sup>317</sup> Harry R. Snyder, “Letter to Stephen B. L. Penrose,” June 10, 1937, HRSP 9.21.

condemning anti-Semitism explicitly. In the letter, he also announced for the first time the official formation of an organization under the name of 'American Friends of the Arabs'.<sup>318</sup> The next circular letter was sent in July 1938 under the new name of the association. The letter emphasized the non-partisanship of the organization, although the fight against Zionism remained the primary goal. The letter again addressed the issue of anti-Semitism, arguing that that pro-Arab advocacy was not equal to anti-Semitism: "*We have wholehearted sympathy for the Arab cause in the Palestine conflict but we oppose any action that is anti-racial and, particularly, anti-Semitic.*"<sup>319</sup> In a private letter, Snyder also mentioned that he had rejected overtures by Nazi organizations for collaboration.<sup>320</sup> Such associations were always liable to damage the anti-Zionist cause.

Despite such assertions, Snyder shared the obsession with Jewish power and wealth with many anti-Zionists. Thus, he repeatedly drew a picture of an all-powerful Zionist lobby, although the 1930s marked a low point of American Zionist influence in comparison to the years before 1917 and after World War II. Thus, in October 1938 he wrote in a newsletter that "*The Zionist lobby is well organized and powerful and will prevail if each one of us does not protest vigorously.*"<sup>321</sup> The Pro-Palestine Federation, a Christian Zionist group launched in 1930, presented the biggest challenge to Protestant anti-Zionism at the time. Counting about 300 members, it was the most public face of Christian Zionism during the pre-war years.<sup>322</sup> Harry Snyder sought to counteract the actions of the Christian Zionists. The latter had petitioned President Roosevelt in June 1937 to intercede with the British to facilitate the partitioning of Palestine and the easing of restrictions on Jewish immigration. In response, Harry

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<sup>318</sup> Harry Snyder, "Newsletter of the American Friends of the Arabs," November 24, 1937, HRSP 9.34.

<sup>319</sup> Harry R. Snyder, "Newsletter of the American Friends of the Arabs," July 27, 1938, HRSP 9.34.

<sup>320</sup> H.S. Kissell, "Letter to H.S. Kissell," February 8, 1938, HRSP 8.10.

<sup>321</sup> Harry Snyder, "Newsletter of the American Friends of the Arabs," October 17, 1938, HRSP 9.34.

<sup>322</sup> Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 65–68.

Snyder launched a counter petition. The petition called on American non-interference and neutrality in the Middle East.<sup>323</sup> The AFA's own lobbying showed some signs of success when the State Department accepted an audience with the group in October 1938. Despite the visible sympathy and access the anti-Zionists enjoyed there, Snyder still had the feeling that the sympathizers of the Arab Cause were on the defensive, as he wrote to Halford Hoskins, whom he invited to join the delegation: *"The Zionists are up to their old tricks once more and this time their Washington lobby is operating very effectively. The pressure they are bringing to bear on our State Department to intercede with Great Britain on their behalf cannot easily be resisted."*<sup>324</sup> Snyder seems not to have been aware that the State Department was actually committed to an anti-Zionist stance. This would change with his visit there. On October 21, 1938, the delegation of Arab-American and AFA activists, including Snyder, Rev. Charles Edward Souter and Dr. Leland W. Parr, but without Hoskins who had declined, visited the State Department. In a 45-minute talk with Secretary of State Hull, they pressed against involvement of the US in the affairs of Palestine and inveighed against the Zionists. A latter newsletter noted that they felt that they had made a difference in the discussion and that therefore there was no further need for action in this matter.<sup>325</sup> The Arab-American part of the delegation, which included representatives from the ANL and Muslim groups, equally gained the impression that Jewish organizations enjoyed little influence on the government's foreign decision makers.<sup>326</sup> This was certainly a realistic assessment.

Indeed, Zionism had remained alien to the State Department even after the election of President Roosevelt, an appointment which was enthusiastically welcomed by many American Jews. After Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, record numbers of Jews sought refuge in Palestine. In 1936, the Arab Revolt erupted after a series of strikes to

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<sup>323</sup> Harry Snyder, "Petition to President Roosevelt," June 28, 1937, HRSP 9.34.

<sup>324</sup> Harry R. Snyder, "Letter to Halford L. Hoskins," October 15, 1938, HRSP 9.8.

<sup>325</sup> Harry R. Snyder, "Newsletter of the American Friends of the Arabs," October 31, 1938, HRSP 9.34.

<sup>326</sup> Shukry E. Khoury, "Letter to Harry Snyder," October 25, 1938, HRSP 8.10; Harry Snyder, "Letter to Thomas Lowell," October 23, 1938, HRSP 8.11.

halt this immigration. In order to accommodate Arab demands, the British downsized the contingent of Jewish immigrants. Faced with an increasing Jewish refugee problem in Europe, the Zionists pushed the US to intercede with the British to ease immigration restrictions. They argued that the British policy was in contravention to the Balfour Declaration and that the US had therefore the right and the duty, in line with the 1924 Anglo-American treaty, to intervene. However, the State Department used its influence in a very limited fashion only and pursued the same policy of non-intervention it had during the 1920s. In contrast to missionary and business interests, Zionism, or the American Jewish immigrants in Palestine, were never considered to be a general US interest, despite the fact that Americans had invested more manpower and money in Palestine than in all the Arab countries combined.<sup>327</sup> In truth, there was no Zionist influence in the State Department – on the contrary.

Besides Arab-Americans, the Protestant anti-Zionists of the AFA were also eager to cooperate with the group of anti-Zionist Reform Jews. In a letter to Arthur H. Sulzberger, the anti-Zionist editor of the *New York Times*, Harry Snyder seems to have sought to appeal to him by again expressing support for changing the immigration laws and opening the borders for Jewish refugees. However, this opinion seems also to have been partly motivated by an effort to equate the persecution of Jews in Germany and the Zionist policies vis-à-vis the Arabs in Palestine. This tendency was clearly noticeable in the letter: *“In connection with the bitter Arab-Jewish controversy over Palestine, we [AFA] always have and always shall denounce selfish, intolerant, imperialistic ambitions of both the Zionists and the British in Palestine, as we now denounce the inhuman, brutal acts of the German Government against the Jews.”*<sup>328</sup> Despite such questionable comparisons between Nazism and Zionism, defending himself and his association from accusations of anti-Semitism remained a primary concern for Snyder, as he did in a NBC radio broadcast during prime time. He claimed that *“(...) we are not anti-semitic (sic!) in any sense. We are wholeheartedly opposed to political Zionism (as are non-Zionists among the Jews themselves) but that does not imply anti-Semitism any more than does opposition to Nazism imply anti-German*

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<sup>327</sup> Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations*, 305–8.

<sup>328</sup> Harry Snyder, “Letter to Arthur H. Sulzberger,” November 16, 1938, HRSP 9.20.

*feelings. Be assured that it hardly behooves us as a Christian nation to refuse to accept the refugees and yet insist that little Palestine keep its doors open to them.*"<sup>329</sup> Although his criticism of US refugee policy was certainly to the point, it served as a rhetorical vehicle for Snyder to again implicitly compare Zionism and Nazism. Such equations of Zionism and Nazism were popular among anti-Zionists at the time and even gained wider currency after the horrors of the Holocaust.

There was little activity of the AFA after these events. A certain Charles H. Carhart from Chevy Chase Md. made an interesting remark in light of the future of pro-Arab advocacy. He suggested to use the notion Palestinian instead of Arab: *"In the general uninformed opinion among us the Arabs are the people of Arabia; the Jews belong in Palestine, having taken their home from Judea. (...) Would it not be better to present the case as between Palestinians, whose ancestors have lived in the land for many centuries, and a group of foreigners, supported by foreign money and permitted to come into the land by a foreign government that began by conquest and is sustained by armed force."*<sup>330</sup> Perhaps this was something to pursue. In the last years of his life, Elihu Grant authored one more book on the Palestinians titled '*Palestine Today*', which was published in 1938. It was based on his last trip to the country during which he had talked with its political elite, including the Mufti.<sup>331</sup> It was a passionate defense of the Arab Cause in Palestine and distributed by the ANL and the American Friends of the Arabs as propaganda. The publication of '*The Arab Awakening*' by George Antonius in February 1939 was welcomed as a major success by AFA.<sup>332</sup> There is no record that the association sent any more newsletters after late 1938 and its activity soon ceased. In 1942, Elihu Grant passed away and Harry Snyder joined the war as a

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<sup>329</sup> Snyder, "Newsletter of the American Friends of the Arabs," October 31, 1938.

<sup>330</sup> Charles H. Carhart, "Letter to Harry Snyder," October 24, 1938, HRSP 8.9.

<sup>331</sup> Elihu Grant, *Palestine Today* ([Printed by J.H. Furst Co.], 1938).

<sup>332</sup> Snyder, "Letter to Mr. Holmes."

military intelligence officer in the Arab Gulf.<sup>333</sup> Protestant anti-Zionist activism would resurface after the war with a vengeance.

## 2.7 The Arab Americans and the AHC

After the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936, the Arab-American anti-Zionist movement further intensified its propaganda efforts and sought closer cooperation with the AHC and its Middle Eastern allies. At this time, a pro-Arab network consisting of several organizations and dedicated activists had been in place in the US for more than a decade. The 'Palestine National League', and Faris Malouf's Syrian and Lebanese 'American Federation of Eastern States' were the most important ones and both dedicated to the cause of Palestine.<sup>334</sup> In summer 1936, the Palestinian National League was replaced by its successor the Arab National League (ANL) in New York.<sup>335</sup> The bulk of politically active Arab-Americans were of Syrian origin. Most of them had been followers of a pan-Syrian ideology, as seen above, before their eventual conversion to Arab or even Palestinian nationalism. The establishment of the Arab National League signified such a shift towards Arab nationalism. However, the language of pan-Syrian ideology was still present in the ANL's publications. A manifesto published in 1937, which lays out the founding principles of the organization, for instance calls for "*complete independence of the Syrian nation as a united, coherent political unit within the natural geographic borders of Natural Syria.*"<sup>336</sup> The term 'Natural Syria' not only includes the territory of the modern state of Syria, but also those

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<sup>333</sup> Wright, Albright, and Flight, "Elihu Grant," 2–3; Snyder, "Newsletter of the American Friends of the Arabs," October 31, 1938; "Inventory of the Harry Roscoe Snyder Papers."

<sup>334</sup> Lawrence Davidson, "The Past as Prelude: Zionism and the Betrayal of American Democratic Principles, 1917-48," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 3 (2002): 30, doi:10.1525/jps.2002.31.3.21.

<sup>335</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 187–89; Davidson, "Debating Palestine," 230–32.

<sup>336</sup> Arab National League of America, "Declaration of the Arab (National) League" 1937; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 190–91.

of Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.<sup>337</sup> The same manifesto declared “*effective resistance to Zionism, the biggest threat to Syrian Unity*”, as imperative.<sup>338</sup> After the establishment of the ANL, the Syrian Habib Katibah was selected as its secretary. Shatara also set out to assemble an advisory board composed of prominent historians, theologians and clergymen both familiar with and sympathetic to the Arab Middle East. The recipients of his letters of invitation included Orientalist Philipp Hitti, philosopher William Hocking, missionary Howard Bliss and the archeologist Elihu Grant.<sup>339</sup> All of them were already active in pro-Arab advocacy. It was also probably no coincidence that the American Friends of the Arabs (AFA) was founded shortly after the ANL. The ANL was also well-connected to the thriving Arabic press, with its office located right next to that of one of the leading Arab-American newspapers, *Al-aiḥ*, which carried many of the ANL’s publications and thus made its propaganda more effective.<sup>340</sup> The ANL was a body well-prepared for lobbying on behalf of Arab nationalist interests in the US.

The superior goal of the ANL during its active years from 1936 until 1941 was to influence US public opinion on the Middle East in a pro-Arab direction. It believed itself to be on the right path to achieving this. In the second year of its existence, it stated that the fact that these efforts were already “*beginning to bear fruit is one of the most important accomplishments of the organization.*”<sup>341</sup> Among the first activities of the ANL was the production of several publications, among others the booklet “Whither Palestine?” The booklet criticized Jewish farming communities in Palestine for not being economically viable and dependent on subsidies from Baron Edmond the Rothschild. This criticism was reflective of the pro-capitalist stance assumed by the

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<sup>337</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 142.

<sup>338</sup> Arab National League of America, “Declaration of the Arab (National) League”; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 190–91.

<sup>339</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 192.

<sup>340</sup> Rutherford, “The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah,” 210.

<sup>341</sup> Arab National League of America, “Declaration of the Arab (National) League”; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 192.



leaders of the Syrian community, which had achieved considerable economic success since their arrival in the US.<sup>342</sup> Such criticism also appealed to all those who believed the Zionists to be Bolsheviks, a widespread view point in the era. This contrasted sharply with the politics of the Jewish community, which, also due to the large Eastern-European immigration, tended towards left-wing politics and the Democratic Party. In light of this, it is no surprise that the dangers of a Jewish State governed by Socialists was a recurring theme in the ANL's propaganda, warning the US foreign policy establishment that support for it ran against geopolitical US interests.

From its start, the ANL coordinated its propaganda activities with the AHC. The most important collaborative effort was the holding of speaking tours throughout the US by intellectuals and politicians close to or belonging to the AHC. These tours served the function of raising sympathy for the Arab cause and gaining new adherents, as well as of collecting money on behalf of the AHC. Between 1937 and 1939, the AHC sent three propaganda delegations to the US, which will be discussed here in detail. This presented the high point of Arab anti-Zionist propaganda activity in the US in the inter-war era. The first speaking tour was conducted by AHC senior member Izzat Tannous and Amin Rihani. In May 1937, AHC chairman and Mufti Mohammed Amin al-Husseini had ordered Tannous to depart for a propaganda and fundraising mission in the United States.<sup>343</sup> After his arrival in New York in May 1937, Izzat Tannous met with ANL representatives. During the meeting, he painted a bleak picture of the future of the Arabs in Palestine. His arguments were later reproduced in an anti-Zionist and anti-British leaflet, which supposedly reached a circulation of 50'000. The leaflet was not entirely free of anti-Semitic imagery, describing the Jews as an arrogant and rich minority: *"Atrocities are being committed [by the British] which would have caused a Turkish soldier to blush (...) For the first time in history, a majority finds it necessary to appeal for protecting its inalienable rights against an arrogant domineering, and highly organized financed minority."*<sup>344</sup> AHC propagandist Izzat Tannous was convinced of the overwhelming wealth and influence of the Zionist US Jews, which contrasted sharply with the powerlessness of the Arab-American anti-Zionist. Writing in retrospect,

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<sup>342</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 197.

<sup>343</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 206.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

he considered US Jews to constitute a powerful monolithic body able to dictate US policy: *“However, all the efforts and the enthusiasm the members of the Arab National league were exerting were insignificant compared to the Zionist propaganda in the United States. In 1937, the Jews in the United States were well-established in all fields of life. They were very influential in the Supreme Court where they were represented by the able Supreme Court Louis Brandeis. They were influential in the law courts where Jewish judges and Jewish lawyers were in dominance. They were influential in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. The diamond, the fur and the clothing industries were their specialties. Hardly could an American buy a fur coat or a sport jacket without it passing through a Jewish hand. They were overwhelming in Hollywood, in the medical profession and most influential in the press.”*<sup>345</sup> It was evident that Tannous, like many other anti-Zionists, was obsessed with images of Jewish power.

After the meeting, Tannous embarked on a speaking and fundraising tour together with Amin Rihani, whose prominence overshadowed that of Tannous. Amin Rihani was a famous American-Syrian man of letters and intellectual. He was not only known for his intellectual achievement, but also as a pioneer of Arab-American anti-Zionist activism in the US and was a longtime friend of Amin al-Husseini.<sup>346</sup> Their first station was New York, where more than 300 persons attended an ANL event on June 5, 1937 to listen to a presentation of the Arab point of view. The evening was opened with the public reading of two telegrams by Amin al-Husseini and Prince Adel Arslan, expressing their support for the ANL. William Hocking also spoke at the event, defending the Arabs’ legal rights and arguing that the Balfour Declaration did not advocate a Jewish state. Public radio broadcasted the whole event, leading to controversy among New York’s Jewish community. Some critics argued that the program was anti-Jewish. However, other Jewish and Zionist leaders rushed to its defense. Among the latter was Rabbi Stephen Wise, the president of the World Jewish Congress, who disclaimed charges of anti-Semitism in the pages of the *New York Times*, *“as if Arab and Jews alike were*

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>346</sup> Michael Suleiman, *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

*not Semites.*<sup>347</sup> Stephen Wise must have been aware that anti-Semitism had always meant hatred for Jews, but he did not seek to confront the Arabs.

The speaking tour took Rihani and Tannous from the East Coast cities to the Midwest metropolises of Chicago, Minneapolis and Cincinnati back to Detroit and its suburbs, which had the highest concentration of Arab-Americans. They spoke to a wide array of audiences, including both meetings with the local Arab communities and speaking events at universities under the sponsorship of the Foreign Policy Association.<sup>348</sup> Tannous was greatly impressed with the skills of Rihani, who was the uncontested star of what seems to have been a successful tour: *"His oration was superb and the way he stole the hearts of his audience was magnificent. As an apprentice in the art of information and propaganda I was greatly impressed by that learned scholar."*<sup>349</sup> According to Tannous the money raised at these events was destined for the *"orphans of our brave men who died in battle."*<sup>350</sup> This was probably a euphemism for funding the Arab Revolt. After completing the tour, Rihani travelled back to Lebanon on an American cruise liner. During a stopover in Palestine on August 8, 1937, he extended an invitation to AHC leaders Amin al-Husseini and Awni Abd al-Hadi, chairman of the Istiqlal Party, as well as Ragheb Mitrage to visit him on the ship. He wanted to get their opinion on *"fundamental issues"*.<sup>351</sup> His exchanges with Rihani seem to have influenced Amin al-Husseini's stance towards the United States. Later in the same month, he complained to the American consul in Jerusalem, George Wadsworth, about the Zionists' alleged political and financial power in the US. He expected these Zionist lobbying efforts to result in eventual US support for Zionism.<sup>352</sup> The impression that Jews possessed overwhelming dominance in the American arena may have pushed the Mufti to put propaganda on the top of the agenda at the Bludan Congress in

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<sup>347</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 199.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 198–200; Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 209–10.

<sup>349</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 210.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>351</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 199–200.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

September 1937. Despite the success of the speaking tour of Rihani and Tannous, it would take more than a year before the arrival of the next AHC delegation in the US in November 1938.<sup>353</sup> Before that, Fakhri al-Barudi, the head of the propaganda bureau in Damascus, would arrive in the US to prepare the next step of the campaign.

The World's Fair, which was set to take place in New York in 1939 and 1940, provided the opportunity for Arab nationalists to present their case in the US. Syria was one of the 54 nations present at the fair and Fakhri al-Barudi alone was responsible for the Syrian pavilion. On August 17, 1938, Barudi and his assistant Fuad Mufarrij therefore travelled to the US. Officially, their mission was to observe the preparations for the Syrian pavilion and help establish a Syrian-American body, which would assist. To the dismay of some Syrian critics, the pavilion was not designed in a specifically Syrian style, but in a generalized Arab Oriental style, reflecting al-Barudi's pan-Arab politics.<sup>354</sup> In spite of their official mission, al-Barudi and Muffarij's principal occupation would be in assisting the Arab-Americans in professionalizing their anti-Zionist activism. After a month in the US, al-Barudi returned to Syria, but Mufarrij stayed on and joined the ANL office in New York, where he linked the Arab-American group up with the propaganda network in Damascus. In this function, Mufarrij collaborated with Habib Katibah and Harry Roscoe Snyder from the American Friends of the Arabs in organizing the speaking tours of pro-Arab advocates throughout the US, which started in November 1938 with AHC representatives Emil Ghoury and Mohammed Beyhum.<sup>355</sup> Harry Roscoe Snyder wished to include his friend Elihu Grant in the delegation. The latter however had expressed his unease with audiences and instead suggested Shatara or Hocking as speakers: *"My contempt for the crowd must be modified by*

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>354</sup> Virginia Vacca, "Partenza Di Fakhri El-Barudi per Gli Stati Uniti," *Oriente Moderno* 18, no. 9 (1938): 506; Raafet Chambour, "Les Causes Profondes de l'incompréhension Entre l'Orient et l'Occident," *Le Monde Arabe*, November 15, 1938.

<sup>355</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Report on Fakhri Al-Barudi," November 17, 1938, CZA S25/4156; Harry Snyder, "Letter to Elihu Grant," September 28, 1938, HRSP 9.4; see also Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 208.

*severe discipline of self. It may even be necessary for me to go to a good actors-school to be trained a bit before I could be worth my salt (...). My great immediate concern is that a channel be provided for frequent, or instantaneous appeal and representation of Arab virtues, courtesies, even rights.*"<sup>356</sup> Despite Grant's reluctance, he would join his Arab colleagues on several occasions during the tour.<sup>357</sup>

Al-Barudi and Muffarij's visit to the US definitely had an effect. Jewish Agency official Eliahu Epstein, who was acquainted with Fuad Mufarrij from his days at the AUB, had warned that his presence would energize the anti-Zionist campaign in the US. *"Fuad's arrival in America led to an increase of the activities of the [Arab National] League (...). Fuad is personally known to the writer as a fellow-student in the American University of Beirut. He possesses excellent organizing skills and is a good speaker in both English and Arabic. He is an extreme pan-Arabist and organized a secret Pan-Arab society at the American University when he was teaching there before he entered the services of the propaganda office of Fakri el-Baroudi. He belongs to a Greek-Orthodox family. He is a friend of Amin el-Rihani who, no doubt, prepared the ground well for him in the United States and gave Fuad good instructions before he left for America. The harm which the activities of Fuad is likely to do or cause should not be underestimated. It is very desirable that our friends in New York should keep an eye on the activities of the League and keep us informed of them.*"<sup>358</sup> Epstein was proven right. In January 1939, Mufarrij started his own propaganda tour in the North-Eastern parts of the US and the Canadian Great Lakes region. The tour plan made use of the existing network of anti-Zionist Protestant missionary circles. A former AUB teacher and colleague, N.M. Pletcher, invited him to speak at several venues in the small town of Faribault MN. In his lecture at the high school, Mufarrij compared the situation in Germany to that in Palestine: *"The only difference is that the situation is completely reversed. In Palestine, the Arabs are being persecuted by the Jews who claim that*

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<sup>356</sup> Elihu Grant, "Letter to Harry R. Snyder," undated, HRSP 9.3.

<sup>357</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 229.

<sup>358</sup> Epstein, "Report on Fakhri Al-Barudi."

*Palestine is their homeland and should become a national home for Jews.*<sup>359</sup> As discussed above, Muffarrij's comparison between Zionism and Nazism was then a popular anti-Zionist theme and continues to be so.

According to Muffarrij's further statements, the Arabs were ready to grant the Jews cultural autonomy, but not political independence. Citing Philip Hitti, he drew a picture of the Arabs' history which was inspired by the nationalist historiography of his time. The Arabs had lived through a golden era until the twelfth century, when they were more advanced than Europe and had figured as the guardians and transmitters of classical teachings and scientific progress. Subjugated by Turkic people, the Arabs declined until the start of their re-ascent in 1908, when, as Mufarrij incorrectly informed his audience, an Arab revolt against the Turkish rule supposedly took place. Zionism, he explained, presented an obstacle to this Arab renaissance and its unification efforts.<sup>360</sup> His next station was Duluth in the north of Minnesota, where the city's mayor, who was acquainted with Mufarrij since their student days in Geneva, had invited him to speak.<sup>361</sup> In January, Fuad Mufarrij continued his speaking tour in the Ontario and Quebec regions of Canada, appearing before different audiences, among others in the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, and speaking to the press. Zionist activists monitored his tour and attended his speeches, where they made every effort to counter his arguments.<sup>362</sup> At the fourth conference of the ANL in early September 1939 in Flint, Mufarrij held a speech besides keynote speaker Elihu Grant. It would be his last. After attending a party in celebration of the successful conference, he died in a car accident, causing extensive grief among his fellow activists.<sup>363</sup> His loss was an immense blow to the anti-Zionist campaign in the US.

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<sup>359</sup> "Arabia, Land of Liberty Seekers, Not Bad Sheiks," *Faribault Daily News*, January 1939, HRSP 9.6.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>361</sup> "Arabian Visits Mayor," *Duluth News Tribune*, January 14, 1939, HRSP 9.6.

<sup>362</sup> "Minutes of Meeting of National Council of the Zionist Organization of Canada," December 26, 1938, CZA S25/4156.

<sup>363</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 229.

After his Eastern Europe tour, Ghoury's next destination was the US where he undertook a propaganda and fundraising tour. Ghoury was perfectly suited for engaging in public relations in the US given his Christian background, his American education and his experience in journalism. On November 11, 1938, he arrived there together with Mohammed Jamil Beyhum, a Beirut man of letters and writer who acted as the Mufti's emissary. The AHC leadership attributed major strategic importance to these trips. This had become clear during the recent congress in Bludan. In his 1946 work on the Palestine issue, Beyhum also dedicated two chapters to foreign propaganda, in which he stated: "*Palestine itself is not the battleground between Arabs and Zionists: It is only the object of these battles. The battleground is Europe and the American continent, especially England and the United States.*"<sup>364</sup> The AHC delegation used different vehicles to get its message out. A few days after their arrival, Beyhum sent a letter to President Roosevelt.<sup>365</sup> Newspaper reports and interviews afforded the delegation the opportunity to spread their viewpoints to the American public. Shortly after their arrival, they threatened via the *New York Times* that American trade with the Muslim world was in danger because of Zionism.<sup>366</sup> In an article in the *Detroit News* in late November 1938, Beyhum claimed that Palestine could not support more than another 400'000 Jewish refugees. In contrast to the AHC rhetoric in Arabic, Beyhum rejected the view that the conflict was a religious war, as Zionist and Jews were not identical. He claimed to advocate a "*democratic government like that enjoyed in America, where all will be proportionately represented.*"<sup>367</sup> By mentioning the fact that large numbers of Jews still lived in Iraq and Syria, he sought to imply that there was no danger for the Jewish minority in a binational state. Like Ghoury, Beyhum did his best to distance himself from National Socialism and Fascism, rejecting reports that the Arab leadership received money from the Germans and the Italians to fund their

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<sup>364</sup> Muḥammad Jamil Beyhum, *Filastin* (Beirut, 1946), 211; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 205.

<sup>365</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 201–2.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 204–5; Epstein, "Report on Fakhri Al-Barudi."

<sup>367</sup> "Arab Envoys Visit City Present Other Side of Palestine Revolt," *Detroit News*, November 23, 1938; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 206.

revolt, which we now know to have been true. Beyhum was not being honest as he knew about the funding from the revisionist powers. In his 1946 book, Beyhum described how he spoke to Amin al-Husseini in his exile in Lebanon about a trip to Europe to discuss the AHC's cooperation with Germany and Italy during the same time. According to Beyhum's account, the Mufti rejected Beyhum's proposal for travelling to Europe, but this seems unlikely.<sup>368</sup> Italian and German support for the Arab Revolt is well documented, as discussed in Chapter One. Rather than portraying events truthfully, Beyhum's account sought to diminish the extent of the Mufti's collaboration with Germany, which had become a target of much criticism after the war.

In the course of their tour, Ghoury and Beyhum spoke to a wide array of audiences, journalists and government members. They visited town halls, and Arab and Muslim associations throughout the whole country. An early highlight was the three-day long Third Arab Conference by the ANL, which was held in Detroit beginning on November 24, 1938. During their travels, Beyhum and Ghoury received much support from Middle Eastern experts and Orientalists, including Elihu Grant. Robert Carson, an acquaintance of Beyhum, who worked as a teacher at the AUB, helped find a specialist to advise them on public affairs. The friendly reception by the US public came as a surprise, as Beyhum, like most of the Arab nationalists, had been convinced that Zionists were dominating US public opinion. After their tour of the US, the delegation proceeded on a short trip to Cuba and Mexico.<sup>369</sup> On January 20, 1939, Ghoury and Beyhum were also received by NEA chief Wallace Murray. They were introduced by Peter S. George of the ANL, who presented them as emissaries of the AHC. In the conversation, the Arab delegates urged the US not to intervene in the conflict and stressed the Palestinian Arab's right for self-determination in line with the Wilson Principles. Ghoury affirmed that the Arabs demanded a stop to Jewish immigration, the withdrawal of the Balfour Declaration and independence for an Arab state in Palestine.<sup>370</sup> There were no immediate results to the talk, nor was there much need for

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<sup>368</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 206–7.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 205–10.

<sup>370</sup> James Rives Childs, "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. J. Rives Childs of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs" (State Department, January 20, 1939), FRUS 867n.01/1402.



convincing, as the State Department had already agreed to pursue a policy of non-intervention with the British, despite the provisions of the 1924 treaty.

Besides raising sympathy for the Arab cause in Palestine, the primary focus of the tour was the collection of donations for the AHC. According to Beyhum, they would not directly accept money, but instead refer supporters to another committee. This committee would then transfer the funds to middlemen in the Middle East: Omar Daouq in Beirut, Talat Pasha Harb in Cairo and Hajj Yaseen Diab in Damascus, who would hand it over to "*Palestinian casualties*".<sup>371</sup> This meant in fact that the donations were meant to fund the Arab Revolt. Several bodies were responsible for handling donations to the Arab Revolt, such as the Supreme Committee of Relief for the Palestinian Victims (Arab. *al-Lajna al-uliya li-ighatat mankubi Falastin*), which had been created in 1936 in Egypt on the initiative of the Islamist YMMA and also enjoyed the support of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>372</sup> That money collected in the US was used to fund the Arab Revolt is also confirmed by British Intelligence. The British Colonial Office gathered information that the Palestine Defence Committee had received 3'346 pounds from Arab and Muslim sources in South and North America, India and South Africa.<sup>373</sup> In sum, Ghoury and Beyhum's tour seems to have been a resounding success from both a financial and a political standpoint. The Jewish Agency received information that Emil Ghoury had collected \$25'000 for the AHC.<sup>374</sup> The wealthy Arab communities overseas were no doubt an attractive target for fundraising. Upon Beyhum and Ghoury's return to Palestine, Amin al-Husseini sent a letter of thanks to ANL leader Amin Farah in July 1939, noting that the delegates "*both speak highly of you and greatly appreciate all the*

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<sup>371</sup> Beyhum, *Filastin*, 232; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 210.

<sup>372</sup> Thomas Mayer, "The Military Force of Islam: The Society of the Muslim Brethren and the Palestine Question, 1945–1948," in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel (RLE Israel and Palestine)* (Routledge, 2015), 101; Mayer, *Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1945*, 44–45.

<sup>373</sup> Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*, 116.

<sup>374</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Letter to Nahum Goldmann," July 28, 1939, CZA S25/4156.

*financial and moral support you extended to them.*"<sup>375</sup> The Mufti would remain a highly popular figure among the country's pro-Arab activists. The ANL asked the Mufti for his pen to have it auctioned at their next conference. The revenue generated would help pay for the ANL's office in New York.<sup>376</sup>

Not everybody in the Arab-American community shared the two emissaries' anti-Zionist views. Salloum Mokarzel, the editor of the Arabic newspaper *al-Hoda*, disagreed with Beyhum on the merits of Zionism. Salloum Mokarzel and his deceased brother Nahum, the former editor of the newspaper, were of Lebanese Maronite extraction. They represented a significant group among American Lebanese, which was critical to Islam, Arab nationalism and their local supporters. In 1925, when the Great Syrian Revolt erupted, Naoum Mokarzel defended the French Mandate, arguing that only the French guarded them from an alliance of Muslim extremism, pro-Arab American missionaries and foreign powers.<sup>377</sup> A similar alliance played out during the Arab Revolt in Palestine and Salloum Mokarzel was certainly recognizant of the parallels. For Beyhum, a Maronite State in Lebanon strengthened by a Jewish State in Palestine presented a real threat. Nevertheless, *al-Hoda* joined the other US-Arabic newspapers in their extensive coverage of Beyhum and Ghoury's speaking tour.<sup>378</sup> This would not be the last time that the Lebanese community clashed with the broader Arab-American community and foreign Arab emissaries on the question of Zionism.

The success of the tour also motivated the ANL to increase its activity. Shatara sought to extend the ANL by having a list assembled of individuals and organizations from the US, Mexico, Canada and Central America sympathetic to its cause. Eventually, the list counted 36 affiliates and 57 individuals.<sup>379</sup> The AHC's public relations activities in the US caught the attention of the Zionist leadership. Shortly after the return of the AHC

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<sup>375</sup> Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, "Letter to Ameen Farah," July 17, 1939, Farah Papers, Bawardi Collection; cited in Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 220.

<sup>376</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 220–22.

<sup>377</sup> Simon Jackson, "Diaspora Politics and Developmental Empire: The Syro-Lebanese at the League of Nations," *Arab Studies Journal* 21, no. 1 (2013): 177.

<sup>378</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 204.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 215–16.

delegation, Eliahu Epstein of the Political Bureau of the Jewish Agency wrote to Nahum Goldmann, the president of the World Jewish Congress in New York, about the Mufti's activities in the United States. Epstein warned that the Mufti sought to further expand his fundraising activities among Arab-Americans and circles friendly to the Arabs. Another aim was to increase his influence in the country's Arab press in particular and the press in general. The report mentioned Amin Rihani as one of the AHC's agents in the US. The Jewish Agency had intercepted several letters to Rihani's friends in Lebanon, in which he explained that he had succeeded in getting a number of important American journalists, writers and entrepreneurs to promise their support for Palestine's Arabs.<sup>380</sup> However, such plans did not come to fruition. Despite the success of the Beyhum-Ghoury delegation, it marked the end of the AHC propaganda offensive in the US and no other followed. There were several reasons for this. Arab nationalism in Palestine and Syria had suffered a setback with the defeat of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1939. The AHC had been dissolved and its leaders were either expelled or had fled abroad into exile. The adoption of the White Paper further reduced Arab discontent. Lastly, the outbreak of World War II made the organization of foreign propaganda campaigns impractical.

In the US, the cooperation of the AHC leadership and other Arab nationalists with National Socialist Germany during World War II would lastingly discredit them and their friends from the ANL. This exposed them to accusations of pro-Fascism and anti-Semitism. According to undercover journalist Roy Carlson, the international German propaganda service *Welt-Dienst* praised the ANL's work in "*spreading the truth*."<sup>381</sup> The secretary of the pro-Nazi German-American Bund James Wheeler-Hill equally promised ANL's Georg Kheiralla full support and cooperation.<sup>382</sup> Fuad Shatara's suicide in 1942 came at the low point of Arab-American anti-Zionist activism in the US. It also left the organization without a leader. Arab nationalists in the US and in Britain were eventually forced to dissociate themselves from the AHC and the Mufti if they wanted to avoid charges of anti-Semitism or even treason.

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<sup>380</sup> Epstein, "Letter to Nahum Goldmann."

<sup>381</sup> John Roy Carlson, *Cairo to Damascus*, 1st ed (New York: Knopf, 1951), 55.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.8 Arab Christians, Islam and Anti-Zionism

Arab Christians played a leading role in the propagandization in the West of the Arab nationalist view point towards the conflict in Palestine. Indeed, most of the those who interacted with European and American audiences on public relations trips were Christians; so were those who negotiated with the British officials in London. This was a deliberate strategy: The Mufti even pushed for higher Christian participation in these delegations. There was also an element of self-selection. Arab Christians were more urban, educated and wealthy than their Muslim brethren. They were thus more prone and more suitable to interact with their Christian counterparts in the West as well as more likely to solicit their sympathy. There was an influential elite group of Christian Arabs of Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian extraction, which was dedicated to Arab nationalism in Palestine. Among this group were such distinguished persons as George Antonius, Emil Ghoury, Philipp Hitti, Amin Rihani, and later Albert Hourani. They shared some common background and outlook. They all came from Western-oriented, wealthy families. Most importantly, they all had enjoyed a higher education at universities in the US, Europe or in Western-led institutions in the Middle East. They also tended to downplay their Christian identity. While Arab Muslim actors emphasized their religious credentials, Arab Christians could not afford to be equally proud Christians and Arab nationalists. They often resorted to accommodating Islamic sentiments, with some even praising Islam as the true Arab religion.

The intellectual and writer Amin Rihani was a prime example of this pattern. This pioneer of Arab anti-Zionist activity in the US was of Lebanese Maronite background, a community which to a substantial degree sympathized with Zionism. His fierce criticism of the Maronite church eventually led to his excommunication. However, he purposefully refrained from ever criticizing Islam.<sup>383</sup> Such characteristics are even more clearly discernible in Hitti's and George Antonius' main works, respectively. '*The Arab Awakening*' and Hitti's '*History of the Arabs*', were inspired by their political convictions and sought to raise sympathy and understanding for the Arab cause in the West. Both works shared a similar attitude toward the issues of Arab identity, Islam and the Jews. Hitti wrote that he considered Islam a more natural progression from the

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<sup>383</sup> Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 101.

original Semitic religion than Judaism or even his own Christianity: *"Islam too, in its original form is the logical perfection of the Semitic religion."*<sup>384</sup> Antonius equally lavished praise on Islam, crediting it with the establishment of a moral culture.<sup>385</sup> It is understandable that they sought to accommodate the views of their Arab Muslim readership. However, these works were directed at a Western, Christian readership, suggesting that these convictions were not only of a tactical nature but also, to some degree, authentic.

Philipp Hitti seems not to have been entirely free of racist prejudice towards Jews and racial pride about his own Arab heritage. In a passage of his otherwise still readable *'History of the Arabs'*, which first appeared in 1937, he depicted the Arabs positively as the ideal and purer version of the original Semitic people vis-à-vis the lesser Semitic Jews. In contrast to modern scholarly opinion, he still understood the Semitic people to be a group foremost connected by race and not by language. There were only two Semitic peoples, the Arabs and the Jews. The speakers of Semitic languages in Ethiopia did not count therefore as Semitic people: *"Of the two surviving representatives of the Semitic people, the Arabians, in a larger measure than the Jews, have preserved the characteristic physical features and mental traits of the family. Their language, though the youngest among the Semitic group from the point of view of literature, has nevertheless conserved more of the peculiarities of the mother Semitic tongue (...) than the Hebrew and its other sister languages."*<sup>386</sup> Hitti moreover complained that it was wrong to associate the Jews foremost with Semitic peoples, as it was done in Europe and in the US. Citing the Jewish-American assyriologist Ephraim Avigdor Speiser, he argued that the Jews had weakened their Semitism by intermingling with other people. Traits that were considered typically Jewish were not Semitic at all, but the result of this process and distinctive to the Jews, he concluded. *"In Europe and America, the word 'Semite' has come to possess a primarily Jewish connotation, and that on account of the wide dispersion of the Jews in these continents."*

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<sup>384</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (MacMillan-Company Limited, 1949), 8.

<sup>385</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement. [With Maps.]*, 218–19.

<sup>386</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 8.

*The ‘Semitic features’ often referred to, including the prominent nose, are not Semitic at all. They are exactly the characteristics which differentiate the Jew from the Semitic type and evidently represent an acquisition from early intermarriages between the Hittite-Hurrians and the Hebrews.*<sup>387</sup> Considering that Hitti wrote these sentences in the 1930s on the background of the racist persecution of Jews in Germany, they make a particularly toxic impression.

George Antonius on the other hand sought to impress upon his Western audience that there was no anti-Semitism in the Arab world. Speaking to the Peel Commission in January 1937, he stated: *“There is no anti-Semitism in the Arab mind. The Arab mind throughout its history has been singularly free from any such thing as anti-Semitism, which we all know, is a European and not an Arab invention, and I am sorry to say, a European Christian invention; but the Arabs throughout their history, and more particularly, the Moslems, have been entirely free of the taint of anti-Semitism; and it is a fact that the greatest days of Jewish efflorescence [since the Dispersion] have taken place when the Jews were under Moslem rule, whether in Baghdad, Cordova, or Cairo, or anywhere else where large Jewish communities were living under the rule of Moslem [sic].”*<sup>388</sup> However, this statement was clearly disingenuous. As shown in Chapter One, by 1937 anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories had permeated Arab nationalist and Muslim political thought. Antonius’ associate, the Mufti Amin Al-Husseini, played an instrumental role in spreading these theories and in presenting the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine as a religious war against Islam.

Political activism by Arab Christians on behalf of Arab nationalism and sometimes Islam could not overshadow the fact that their status in the Arabo-Islamic world was always volatile. Religious hatred could even target the most dedicated activists, like Philip Hitti. In a 1962 polemic by an Al-Azhar professor against ‘Orientalism’, a traditional critique within Islamism which was later taken up by Edward Said, Philip Hitti was described as *“A Christian from Lebanon (...). One of the most disputatious of the enemies of Islam, who makes a pretense of defending Arab causes in America and is*

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> George Antonius, “Presentation to the Peel Commission” January 18, 1937, ISA 65/2869; cited in Boyle, *Betrayal Of Palestine*, 28.

*an unofficial advisor of the American State Department on Middle Eastern Affairs. He always tries to diminish the role of Islam in the creation of human civilization and is unwilling to ascribe any merit to the Muslims (...) His History of the Arabs is full of attacks on Islam and sneers at the Prophet. All of it is spite and venom and hatred (...).*<sup>389</sup> This volatile status was also apparent in the Arab national movement in Palestine. During the Arab Revolt, Christians were underrepresented in the military leadership. This raises the question how deeply Palestine's Christian Arabs were really invested in the Arab Revolt. Yishuv and British officials felt that they had acted in solidarity with the insurgents mainly out of fear for Arab Muslim reprisals. Indeed, several Arab Christians related this viewpoint to Yishuv and British officials, and there were also several incidents of anti-Christian violence by Muslim insurgents. The AHC leadership strongly denounced these actions, fearing Arab intercommunal violence. The publication of such incidents would have led to an erosion of Western anti-Zionist support for the Arab cause in Palestine, which the AHC so eagerly sought.

## 2.9 Conclusion

American non-Jewish anti-Zionism rested on two groups: Protestant missionary circles and Arab-Americans. Protestant missionaries, which had established themselves in the Middle East since the early nineteenth century, predominantly felt sympathy for the national aspirations of the Arabs, which they considered to be a fruit of their civilizing mission, while they rejected Zionism. This rejection of Zionism not only stemmed from a political assessment of the situation, but also from antipathy towards Jews rooted in Christian theological arguments. In line with classical replacement theory, it was argued that Jews had forsaken their claim on the land of Israel and on peoplehood by not recognizing Jesus. The rise of dispensationalism, from which mainline Protestants sought to distinguish themselves, further motivated the rise of Protestant anti-Zionism. Arab-Americans, most of them of Syrian or Lebanese extraction, immediately voiced their opposition to the Balfour Declaration and started establishing their anti-Zionist groups. Pan-Syrianism was the dominating creed. Leading Arab-American anti-

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<sup>389</sup> Mohammed Bahi, *Missionaries and Orientalists in Their Position on Islam* (Cairo: Al-Azhar Press, 1962); cited in Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," *The New York Review of Books*, June 24, 1982.

Zionists like Abraham Mitrie Ribhany advocated a Greater Syria under American protection after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. In this, they agreed with Protestant missionary circles. The influence of both groups was palpable in the King-Crane commission in 1919, which was tasked to investigate the conditions in Syria. It quickly found Zionism to be unrealizable and proposed an American mandate in Greater Syria, including Palestine, just as its proponents had hoped it would.

The foreign policy establishment was also apprehensive of Zionism. The Middle East experts in the State Department and in particular its Division of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) were united by their critical attitude towards the Balfour Declaration and ignored the pro-Zionist statements of Congress and the president. They rejected a more active role of the US in Palestine, despite British wishes to involve the Americans. Many State Department officials were influenced by conspiracy theories and prejudiced in their views of Zionism, believing it simultaneously to be bolshevist, atheistic or theocratic. The Zionist movement in the US experienced a decline after the Balfour Declaration and had little influence. This became apparent after the 1929 massacres in Palestine, which shocked the US Jewish community and led to calls for a more active role of the US in Palestine. However, the Zionist movement proved unable to use this outrage to push for a more pro-Zionist US policy. The State Department actually pushed into the opposite direction, embracing the new British policy, which limited immigration and land sales to Jews. The way in which the Zionists and the anti-Zionists tried to exert pressure was a function of the structure and the goals of these respective groups. The anti-Zionists enjoyed access to the State Department and to the decision-making process. This fact was symbolized by George Antonius, who was a source for the State Department on Palestine. Therefore, their influence rested mainly on personal contact. The Zionists on the other hand had no voice in the State Department. They therefore had to resort to larger degrees of public campaigning and appealing to elected officials to exert influence – which, however, remained largely inefficient during the period discussed in this chapter.

The rise of National Socialism and the Arab Revolt altered the configuration of the conflict. When the European Jews were already facing mounting anti-Semitism and thus emigrated in record numbers, Britain reduced Jewish immigration to Palestine. The anti-Zionists were fearful that the State Department would press the British for a more pro-Zionist policy in Palestine, which was their right according to the Anglo-



American Treaty of 1924. Convinced of overwhelming Jewish power and influence, the AHC extended its propaganda to the US, which they considered an area of prime importance. In collaboration with the ANL, they organized a fundraising and propaganda campaign. Protestant anti-Zionists, who formed their first organized body during this period, joined in. The anti-Zionists were helped by the fact that a group of Arab nationalist scholars like Philip Hitti and George Antonius helped shape conventional wisdom about the Middle East. However, the anti-Zionists soon found out that the State Department had no intention of influencing the British government on behalf of the Zionists. With the adoption of the White Paper in 1939, the wishes of the Arab national leadership and their anti-Zionist supporters were formally satisfied. Palestine was closed as a haven for Jewish refugees from Europe, without the State Department willing to intervene. Anti-Zionism in the US had contributed to this fateful State Department foreign policy. Had the Zionist groups prevailed over them in the crucial period of 1929-1939, many more Jews could have been saved from the horrors of the Holocaust. The alliance of the Palestinian national movement with the Axis powers during World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust would severely weaken the anti-Zionist movement in the US in the following years, but it nevertheless remained a viable force in American politics.

### 3 The Arab League Propaganda Infrastructure to fight Partition

After the suppression of the Arab Revolt and the start of World War II in September 1939, a temporary peace reigned in Palestine. The Jewish Agency had resolved to cooperate with the mandate government, in spite of the recent introduction of the White Paper, which had practically abrogated the Balfour Declaration. Ben Gurion expressed the policy of the Jewish Agency in the formula: *“So far as the war against Nazi Germany is concerned we must aid England in every way possible as if there had been no White Paper. So far as the enforcement of the White Paper’ is concerned we must continue our struggle against it as if there were no war against Nazi Germany.”*<sup>390</sup> With the defeat of the Axis powers however in sight, the question of the future Palestine reemerged on the political stage. Supported by the British, the AHC reconstituted itself as the representative body of the Palestinians. In Musa Alami, a moderate follower of the Mufti, the British believed to have found the ideal person to direct the Arab national movement. The Arab League, which was founded in March 1945, took over the mission to explain the Arab view point to the West, with mixed results.

#### 3.1 The Reestablishment of the AHC

Since the late 1930s, the Arabs in Palestine lacked political representation. The AHC under the chairmanship of Mufti Amin al-Husseini and later his relative, Jamal al-Husseini, had been disbanded by the British Mandatory Administration in 1937. Al-Husseini and many of his followers first found refuge in Lebanon and then in Rashid al-Gaylani’s Iraq. After the failure of Rashid al-Gaylani’s Axis-sponsored revolt against the British, he fled to Nazi Germany, where he worked as a propagandist for the Nazi regime.<sup>391</sup> Musa Alami, a loyal follower and relative of the Mufti, was the unlikely man

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<sup>390</sup> “No Title,” *Jewish Frontier* 7 (1940): 12.

<sup>391</sup> On the Mufti see Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem und die Nationalsozialisten. Eine politische Biographie Amin el-Husseinis* (Darmstadt: WBG,

to put together a new Arab representation. Since 1943, Alami worked to put together a new Arab leadership acceptable to both Arabs and British. In this task, he was assisted by Albert Hourani's brother, Cecil Hourani. Unlike many other Arab Leaders of pre-WW II Palestine, foremost Amin al-Husseini, Alami emerged from the war relatively untainted. According to his collaborator Cecil Hourani, Alami had no known history of collusion with Nazism, although he had stayed with the Mufti Amin al-Husseini in Iraq in 1940 and 1941. Hourani also believed him to be of a diplomatic nature, free from anti-Semitism. Musa Alami's stature was strengthened at the inter-Arab Alexandria Conference in October 1944, which prepared the establishment of the Arab League. Palestine figured on the top of the agenda. With the leading nationalist leaders of the Palestinians in exile, Musa Alami was chosen to represent them at the conference. This happened after much flip-flopping by the British, who had initially opposed his presence due to Palestine's unresolved status. Alami used the opportunity to hold a lengthy and eloquent speech, criticizing Britain for failing to implement the White Paper of 1939 and for not putting a stop to Jewish immigration, which might result in a Jewish majority or the partition of Palestine. Despite this, his moderate politics and his Arab nationalist credentials would make him an acceptable partner for the British. Cecil Hourani had made the acquaintance of Alami during the latter's attendance of the St. James Conference in 1939 probably through the mediation of Jamal Husseini, a friend of Hourani's father and Alami's brother-in-law. During these war years, Cecil Hourani and his brother Albert worked for British Intelligence in Cairo.<sup>392</sup> It was here where the post-war order of the Middle East was to be shaped.

The Middle East Intelligence Centre (MEIC) was headed by Brigadier Ittyd Clayton, a mysterious figure, whose influential role in determining Britain's Middle East policy has until recently been underestimated due to its clandestine character. The historian of

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2007); Z. Elpeleg and Shmuel Himelstein, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin Al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement* (Routledge, 2012); see also the older Joseph B. Schechtman, *Mufti And The Fuehrer - Rise And Fall Of Haj Amin El-Husseini*, First edition (Thomas Yoseloff, 1965).

<sup>392</sup> Cecil Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey: Lebanon and Beyond* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 50–51.

British Arabists McLoughlin calls him “*the greatest mover and shaker in planning Britain’s future role in the Arab world.*”<sup>393</sup> Clayton pursued a grand imperial strategy to secure Britain’s dominating influence in the Middle East in the post WWII era. His plans aimed at expelling France from the region and establishing a regional military alliance against the Soviet Union. Clayton opposed an independent Jewish State in the Middle East. Instead he envisaged a Jewish entity in a Greater Syrian state, which was to enter into a confederation with Iraq. Through his close personal relations with Arab League president Abdul Azzam and his service as the British envoy to the organization, Clayton bore a great influence on the original nature of the Arab League. But he also continued to maintain close contact with the Arabist circles in Britain, in particular with its leading think-tank Chatham House, for which he acted as deputy in Cairo.<sup>394</sup> Cecil Hourani worked in Cairo as a liaison between Clayton and Arab politicians. In this function, he helped Musa Alami to convince Clayton that there was a need for a new Palestinian leadership and that Jamal al-Husseini, a former collaborator of the Mufti, whom Britain had expelled from Palestine in 1941, would be its most suitable leader. According to the plan, “[...] *Jamal Husseini [...] could be rehabilitated and become the figurehead behind which Musa would be the effective power.*”<sup>395</sup> Through Musa Alami, the new body could be pushed into a moderate direction, amenable to dealing with the British.

The idea to reestablish the AHC and appoint Jamal as its leader was embraced by the British administration. They also hoped to exert a moderating influence on the new AHC through the nascent Arab League.<sup>396</sup> In light of the upcoming Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, which was to investigate the situation in Palestine, High Commissioner Alan Cunningham endorsed the idea of reestablishing the AHC: “*It was*

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<sup>393</sup> Leslie J. McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge: British Arabists in the Twentieth Century* (ItAHCa Press, 2002).

<sup>394</sup> Meir Zamir, *The Secret Anglo-French War in the Middle East: Intelligence and Decolonization, 1940-1948* (Routledge, 2014), 36–38.

<sup>395</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 52.

<sup>396</sup> Haim Levenberg, *Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945-1948* (Psychology Press, 1993), 5.

*clearly unsatisfactory to have no representative body to represent all the Arabs, and I therefore agreed to recognize a new Arab Higher Executive under Jamal's leadership [...]. It should be remembered that this was at the time when we were expecting the report of the Anglo-American Committee to bring us a solution.*"<sup>397</sup> Syrian Premier Jamil Mardam Bey also travelled to Jerusalem in 1945 on behalf of the Arab League on a mission to unite the contesting factions in a new representative council of the Arab Palestinians.<sup>398</sup> On November 22, 1945, the reconstitution of the AHC was declared, and whose party composition was identical to the one dissolved eight years earlier by the British. The chairmanship was kept open on purpose to be later assumed by Jamal al-Husseini. The Committee was dominated by the Husseini clan, who controlled 5 out of 12 seats via their Palestine Arab Party (PAP), while the five other Arab parties possessed one seat each. There were also two independents, Ahmed Hilmi Pascha and Musa al-Alami, who through familial and political ties were however connected to the dominating PAP.<sup>399</sup> This problematic 'compromise' antagonized the other parties and in the end stoked inter-Arab rivalry in Palestine instead of calming it.

After several public appeals by the Arab League and others, High Commissioner Cunningham agreed on November 24, 1945 to release Jamal al-Husseini from his exile in Rhodesia.<sup>400</sup> He had been kept there since his arrest by the British in Iran in 1941, where he had fled after participating in the abortive Nazi-supported Iraqi coup d'état by Rashid Ali Gaylani together with the Mufti.<sup>401</sup> Haim Levenberg suspects that the liberation of Jamal was decided upon beforehand and that the whole sequence of events surrounding his release was a ruse put into effect to shield Jamal from

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>398</sup> Walid Khalidi, "On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 1 (September 1, 2005): 71, doi:10.1525/jps.2005.35.1.60.

<sup>399</sup> Levenberg, *Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945-1948*, 10.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 12–13.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 6–7.

accusations of being a British agent.<sup>402</sup> This afforded him greater credibility with the Arabs. The plan, if it existed, succeeded for the moment. When Jamal returned to Palestine in early February 1946, he persuaded a recalcitrant AHC, against the opposition of PAP secretary Emil Al-Ghoury, to testify before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry due to arrive on March 5, 1946 in Palestine.<sup>403</sup> If the British believed that the new AHC would be more open to compromise, they were wrong. The report, which was published on April 30, 1946, was rejected by the Arabs. Instead, the new AHC, like its predecessor during the Arab Revolt, internationalized the fight against a Jewish state in Palestine, which suddenly seemed likelier than ever.

### 3.2 The Preparation of the Propaganda Campaign

During 1944, Arab governments started to consider a new propaganda campaign in Western countries in order to influence their future policy towards Palestine. In August 1944, the British Embassy in Jeddah reported to the Foreign Office that Ibn Saud had received a telegram from the Iraqi government requesting his opinion and support on the establishment of Arab bureaus in Washington and London.<sup>404</sup> The idea of establishing propaganda offices in Washington and London was first brought up at the preparatory committee for the Arab congress in Alexandria between September and October 1944. The Saudis presented a memorandum to discuss the idea. Its preamble stated that the *“danger of Zionism is one that threatens the interests of all Arabs and Moslems.”* The plan was first to send a delegation to President Roosevelt and the King of England to ascertain their views. Their missions would have to be kept secret. Otherwise, *“the Jews and their supporters will create confusion and nullify our work.”* If the other Arab states agreed, they proposed the dispatch of a propaganda mission, which should commit itself solely to the issue of Palestine and refrain from other particularistic, possibly contentious issues.<sup>405</sup> The idea was again brought up at the

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 16–19.

<sup>404</sup> “From Jedda to Foreign Office,” August 21, 1944, TNA CO 733/462/1.

<sup>405</sup> “Translation of a Memorandum Regarding the Establishment of Arab Propaganda Bureaus in Washington and London,” in *1943-1944*, vol. 3, The Arab League: British Documentary Sources, 1995, 594.

inter-Arab Alexandria Conference in October 1944, which prepared the establishment of the Arab League. In his speech, Musa Alami proposed the creation of an Arab fund modelled on the Jewish National Fund to finally stop Arab land sales to Jews. The body's mission was to acquire land and turn it into waqfs as well as improving the cultivation methods of Arab peasants. The Arab Development Society would later grow out of this project. Musa Alami also touched upon the topic during his speech in Alexandria. He proposed sending Arab delegations to London, Washington and Moscow to lobby the respective governments with regard to the Palestine question, with Syrian Prime Minister Saadallah Jabiri suggesting the attachment of a propaganda officer to each delegation.<sup>406</sup> The inter-Arab discussions on propaganda in the West continued after Alexandria and took on a more concrete form.

In December 1944, a draft proposal for a comprehensive propaganda campaign on behalf of an Arab state in Palestine, including the establishment of Arab Offices, was submitted to the delegates of Arab governments. It noted that insufficient attention had so far been paid by the Arabs to propaganda, while *"the efforts of the enemy and their propaganda have continued since the last war and have greatly increased recently."*<sup>407</sup> Therefore, it was expedient to start a large-scale public diplomacy effort in the West, aimed both at influencing public opinion and lobbying the government. The plan foresaw the opening of two Arab Offices in London and New York with branches in Washington, San Francisco, Chicago and Boston. While the Arabs could count on a large network of supporters in England, the draft assessed that the situation would be more difficult in the US. Here, the Arab propaganda effort would also have to rely on employing the services of PR-agencies as well as on the support of the local Arab community. Mahmoud Fawzi, the Egyptian Consul General in Palestine, was suggested for director of the New York office, while Hussein Khalidi, president of the Reform Party (Arab. *Islah*) and a member of the AHC, would head the London office. Both offices would be assisted by an Advisory Committee consisting of prominent supporters of the Arab cause from the arenas of politics, the military, media, science and religion. The suggested Advisory Committee for the Arab Office in London included

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<sup>406</sup> Anita LP Burdett, *The Arab League: British Documentary Sources, 1943-1963* (Archive Editions, 1995), 579–88.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

MPs from both Labour and the Conservatives, for example, the influential travel writer Freya Stark, the historians Hamilton Gibb and Arnold Toynbee, Army Colonel Newcombe as well as others. They would thus make use of the existing anti-Zionist network, which was already involved in the Palestine Information Office. Furthermore, the draft suggested that another office be opened in Cairo and delegations sent to the Soviet Union and the Vatican.<sup>408</sup> The British enjoyed a good relationship with Musa Alami and were regularly updated by him on such plans. Thus, he told the Oriental Counselor at the British Embassy in Egypt in November 1944 that, at the Alexandria conference and the subsequent Preparatory Committee of the General Arab Conference, the sum of £1 million for the propaganda campaign had been discussed. Egypt would cover half of the expenses and Iraq a fourth, while the rest would be divided among the other Arab countries. Interestingly, they planned to invest the bulk of the money in the US.<sup>409</sup> This underlined the fact that the Arabs, like the Zionists, considered the US to be the central area of the struggle over the future of Palestine. However, it seems that these proposed budgets were subject to frequent changes because of the power struggles between the different Arab states, which will be discussed below.

Despite initial skepticism, there were voices within the British Foreign Policy establishment who looked with favor upon the increased Arab propaganda effort. In September 1944, the Eastern Department sent out a letter, collecting opinions on the Arab plans. The British ambassador to the US, the Earl of Halifax, was most enthusiastic about such plans. Like the Arabs, he believed that the Zionists held sway over the public arena: *"Hitherto propaganda in the United States about the Middle East has mainly been conducted by extreme Zionists. In consequence, the Arab countries and we ourselves have suffered. An organization presenting the Arab case in the United States would in my view be helpful, provided it is conducted on the right lines. But it would have to reckon on unscrupulous opposition from Zionists with ample funds and much influence."*<sup>410</sup> The Earl of Halifax made several recommendations regarding

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 88–93.

<sup>409</sup> "Telegram from British Embassy in Cairo to Anthony Eden," November 26, 1944, TNA CO 733/462/1.

<sup>410</sup> "Earl of Halifax to Foreign Office," October 20, 1944, TNA CO 733/462/1.



the procedure and organization of these offices. Thus, he advised them to recruit Arabs who had been educated at Western institutions in the Arab world, maybe some Americans, but no British. Furthermore, their work should not focus on the playing off of Western nations against each other or against their Jewish communities. Instead, it should primarily address the American public, emphasizing the cultural, scientific and historical achievements of the Arabs and their current needs. He suggested Turkish propaganda which had promoted a “new Turkey” as a role model to emulate.<sup>411</sup>

It is interesting to mention at this point that the British ambassador not only encouraged the Arabs to conduct propaganda in the US but would also organize his own campaign. For this purpose, he sent the Orientalist and committed anti-Zionist activist Freya Stark on a lecture tour of the US.<sup>412</sup> This could not halt the rising sympathy for Zionism in the US, which resulted from the expanding knowledge on the horrors of the Holocaust. The fate of the displaced persons (DPs), Jewish refugees lingering in German camps, who had mostly sought to emigrate to Palestine, was used by the Zionists to further raise sympathy. The British therefore started another propaganda campaign in the US, which not only sought to disassociate the question of the DPs from the future status of Palestine, but also to taint the image of the Zionists.<sup>413</sup> This attempt, however, was met with little success. On October 4, 1946, Truman publicly endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state and the admittance of 100'000 Jewish refugees to Palestine, coupling both questions and thus rendering the British campaign in the US obsolete. Musa Alami was meanwhile pursuing his plans for the establishment of Arab propaganda bureaus. In January 1945, Musa Alami met with the Saudi King, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, to discuss the issue of Arab propaganda abroad. Ibn Saud was averse to the idea of opening the

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<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Efraim Karsh and Rory Miller, “Freya Stark in America: Orientalism, Antisemitism and Political Propaganda,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 3 (2004): 315–332; Simon Albert, “The Wartime” Special Relationship”, 1941—45: Isaiah Berlin, Freya Stark and Mandate Palestine,” *Jewish Historical Studies*, 2013, 103–130.

<sup>413</sup> Arie J. Kochavi, “Britain’s Image Campaign against the Zionists,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2001): 294–96, doi:10.1177/002200940103600204.

offices immediately. Instead, he favored sending representatives of each Arab nation to King George, Roosevelt and Churchill, respectively. Upon completion of their mission, these emissaries would decide whether there was a need for propaganda offices. If so, he would personally dispatch his son Faisal to work for the offices and contribute to their funding. Alami was skeptical, informing the British that he felt that Ibn Saud was reluctant to support the establishment of the offices because he could not offer as much financial support as his position in the Arab world demanded.<sup>414</sup> In a telegram to the British embassy in Jedda, the Foreign Office rejected the idea of sending special emissaries to London and Washington given the war situation, but agreed with the need for a careful selection of personnel for propaganda offices, underlining again their involvement and the care that they had invested in the project.<sup>415</sup> This intervention again underscored the impression that they were not merely observing the Arab propaganda effort, but were a partner in it.

At the next Arab League conference in Cairo, the plans for establishing propaganda bureaus and an organization similar to the Jewish National Fund were largely confirmed. It was decided to endow the Arab Offices with £2 million and the Arab Development Society with £5 million. Both organizations were placed under the chairmanship of Musa Alami.<sup>416</sup> But when he turned to the respective governments to deliver on their promises, they demurred. During lunch with Brigadier Clayton and British embassy staff in Cairo, Musa Alami told them that the plans had become the object of inter-Arab rivalry. Every party sought to appoint their own candidates, with no regard for qualifications. The Egyptians originally had promised £250'000, reducing the sum later to £200'000. In return for the money, they also asked for a say in choosing the Offices' staff.<sup>417</sup> Eventually, only Iraq complied, paying a mere £250'000 for the Arab Development Society for the first two years and then discontinuing its payments

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<sup>414</sup> "Telegram from Jedda to Foreign Office," January 22, 1945, TNA CO 733/462/1.

<sup>415</sup> "Telegram from Foreign Office to Jedda," January 24, 1945, TNA CO 733/462/1.

<sup>416</sup> Sir Geoffrey Warren Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country: The Story of Musa Alami* (Praeger, 1969), 137.

<sup>417</sup> T. R., "British Embassy Memorandum on Musa Alami," June 29, 1945, TNA CO 733/468/14.

as well.<sup>418</sup> The payments were done under the sponsorship of Iraqi strongman Nuri Said, whom Musa Alami had met for the first time several years before while collaborating to negotiate an end to the Arab general strike in Palestine in 1936. Later, they also met at the London Conference and in Iraq in 1940, when Nuri advised the Arab exiles to accept the 1939 White Paper.<sup>419</sup> Nuri Said probably sought to strengthen Alami as an independent leader at the expense of the Mufti Amin al-Husseini and his followers, whom Nuri considered an enemy since he had instigated the Iraq coup in 1941. At that time, the coup had forced Nuri Said to flee his native Iraq for Palestine temporarily.<sup>420</sup> But the Iraqi contributions turned Alami's projects into a contentious issue in the inter-Arab rivalry. There were two rifts: One between the Hashemite countries, Iraq and Jordan, and the rest of the Arab countries, and one between the followers of Amin al-Husseini, known as the Husseinis, and their foreign and domestic enemies. It was almost impossible to reconcile these different factions with each other, even for a man as understanding as Musa Alami. Arab League Secretary Azzam Pasha was also instrumental in cutting support from the Arab Offices, which enjoyed a high degree of independence under Musa Alami.<sup>421</sup> This inter-Arab rivalry affected the efficiency of the Arab propaganda campaign. Alami had initially planned to open offices in Jerusalem, London, Washington, Paris and Moscow, although the latter two are not mentioned in the Arab League protocols as permanent offices but as delegations. As a result of the refusal of all Arab states apart from Iraq to meet their obligations, Alami had to raise the money by himself and so scrapped the plans for offices in Paris and Moscow. Thus, in 1945, Arab offices were only opened in London and Washington, with the central office located in Jerusalem.

This was not the end of the dispute. The Arab League conference in the Syrian town of Bludan in June 1946 strengthened the authority of the AHC and confirmed its claim to be the sole representative of the Palestinian Arabs. Therefore, the delegates

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<sup>418</sup> Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country*, 137.

<sup>419</sup> Khalidi, "On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946," 64–66.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>421</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 65.

decided that the AHC was the only organ allowed to present the Arab case to an international audience and that the Arab Offices had to work under its authority. Musa Alami, who had effectively been toppled, and Iraq did everything to sabotage these plans. Jamal al-Husseini meanwhile raised money from the Syrian and Lebanese governments for AHC propaganda, receiving more than £1'000'000 from Syria alone by March 1947. He however failed to convince the Iraqi government to change their view and provide support for placing the Arab Offices under the authority of the AHC. Due to its failure to overtake the Arab Offices, the AHC planned to launch its own propaganda campaign.<sup>422</sup> Propaganda delegations visited Russia, North and South America as well as Europe to lobby for the Arab cause. Izzedin Shawa was sent to London to establish a separate AHC Propaganda Office, although it was to collaborate with Alami's Arab Office.<sup>423</sup> Other AHC Propaganda Offices were established in New York and Washington.<sup>424</sup> In early 1946 another office was opened in Beirut led by another member of the Husseini clan, Dr. Daud al-Husseini.<sup>425</sup> However, the damage was already done. The Arab leaders' lack of will to compromise had invariably weakened their ability to win the struggle for the hearts and minds of Western audiences. This contributed to their loss at the UN in November 1947. Not long after that, in December 1947, Iraqi Premier Salah Jabr informed Alami that it would cease payments to his Arab Offices within a week. Without Arab League support and lacking funds, the Washington Office closed within months, while the London Office continued for another two years.<sup>426</sup> The Arab League would cease its propaganda activity for a few years.

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<sup>422</sup> Levenberg, *Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945-1948*, 101–3.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>424</sup> Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country*, 150.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

### 3.3 The Arab Offices

Despite these conflicts, Musa managed to set up Arab Offices in two Western and two Arab capitals over the course of the next two years. In April 1945, Musa Alami travelled to Bagdad in order to recruit personnel for the Arab Offices in London and Washington.<sup>427</sup> The London Office was set up in the spring of 1945, the Washington Office in the summer of the same year. The Arabs considered the US office to be the most important one from a strategic point of view. Most resources were therefore invested there.<sup>428</sup> The Washington Office will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The central Propaganda Office (Arab. *maktab al di'aya*) in Jerusalem coordinated the activities of the different Arab Offices. It was formally established in March 1945, with Musa Alami assuming the post of General Director.<sup>429</sup> It was officially opened three months later, in June 1945, and chaired by Rajai al-Husseini, another member of the Husseini clan. He was shortly thereafter replaced by Ahmed Shuqayri who had returned from the Washington Office. In 1946, Darwish al Miqdadi replaced Shuqayri, who continued to work for the Jerusalem Office.<sup>430</sup> Miqdadi was an important Arab nationalist activist and intellectual. Musa Alami showed remarkable success in recruiting young, Western-educated Arab intellectuals for his task. One of his brightest recruits was certainly Albert Hourani, who then worked together with his brother Cecil at the Middle East Intelligence Centre (MEIC) in Cairo.<sup>431</sup> The proceedings of Hourani's employment for the Arab Office confirm the impression that the British looked

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<sup>427</sup> Hugh S. Bird, "Letter from Hugh Stonehewer Bird to Anthony Eden et. Al.," May 29, 1945, TNA CO 733/462/1.

<sup>428</sup> Arab League, "Concept for the Arab Office" n.d., CZA A289-49; Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 211.

<sup>429</sup> Levenberg, *Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945-1948*, 101–2.

<sup>430</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 370.

<sup>431</sup> Abdulaziz Al-Sudairi, *A Vision of the Middle East: An Intellectual Biography of Albert Hourani* (I.B.Tauris, 1999), 23.

benevolently upon Musa Alami's propaganda plans and did their best to support them. With the approval of the Foreign Office, the Minister Resident in the Middle East, where Hourani had worked since 1943, released him in 1945 for the purpose of working at the Arab Office in Jerusalem.<sup>432</sup> Hourani started working at the Arab Office in November 1945. In the same month, Musa Alami wrote to the Ministry of Labour to have him released from Military Service, as he planned to send him to London the next spring. Addressing Hourani's superior, Brigadier Iltyd Clayton, he wrote: *"I hope you will emphasise that his work here is not as much to do propaganda in the narrow sense as to help in establishing better Anglo-Arab relations."*<sup>433</sup> Clayton complied with Alami's request to release him from his duties.<sup>434</sup> Besides Shuqayri and Hourani, the Jerusalem staff included Ruhi Katib, future mayor of Jerusalem, Walid Khalidi, Nasr al-Din Nashashibi, Burhan Dajani, Wadi Tarazi and Abdul Hamid Yasin.<sup>435</sup> It was a fine assortment of talented young men.

Albert Hourani's career is exemplary for many Arab intellectuals from elite backgrounds who turned Arab nationalism into their cause. He was born in Manchester to Christian Lebanese parents in 1915. After graduating from Oxford, he returned to his parents' homeland and became a lecturer at the American University of Beirut (AUB).<sup>436</sup> The AUB was a hotbed of Arab nationalism and it was no coincidence that Musa Alami and many other figures like the later PFLP-leader George Habash counted

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<sup>432</sup> "From Foreign Office to the Ministry of Labour," December 21, 1945, TNA FO 371/45241.

<sup>433</sup> Musa Alami, "Letter to Iltyd Clayton," November 8, 1945, TNA FO 371/45241.

<sup>434</sup> Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 217.

<sup>435</sup> Khalidi, "On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946," 76.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 67.

among its graduates.<sup>437</sup> There, Hourani came into contact with the leading intellectuals of pan-Arab and pan-Syrian nationalism, among others the secular nationalists Constantine Zurayk, who taught history at the AUB, leaving a great impression on his world view:<sup>438</sup> In retrospect, he wrote about this important period in his life: *“At this time I saw the problems of Syria and Palestine in the perspective of Arab nationalism. This was an idea about which I learned in Beirut; that there was an Arab nation of which the emergence to full, independent and united national life was being impeded by British and French rule, and by the artificial frontiers imposed upon it after the First World War, and that if only its energies could be released, it could move into a new and more fruitful period of social and intellectual growth.”*<sup>439</sup> Most of the publications of the Arab Office in Jerusalem were written by Albert Hourani. They clearly targeted a Western educated and liberal minded audience. He addressed them in a scholarly tone, using rational arguments rather than emotions to press his case. In ‘Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem’, one of the first publications authored by Hourani for the Arab Office, he contended that Zionism offers no solution to the ‘Jewish Problem’. Instead, Hourani opts for assimilation of Jews into Western societies.<sup>440</sup> This indicates that Hourani must have been aware of the inner-Jewish debate on Zionism. However, by the sheer dimension of the Holocaust, this debate had been won by the Zionists.

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<sup>437</sup> For a discussion of the connection between Arab Nationalism and the AUB, see Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (University of Texas Press, 2011).

<sup>438</sup> Khalidi, “On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946,” 68; See also Todd Thompson, “Albert Hourani, Arab Christian Minorities and the Spiritual Dimension of Britain’s Problem in Palestine, 1937-1947,” in *Christians and the Middle East Conflict*, ed. John H. A. Dyck and Jens Zimmermann (Routledge, 2014), 66–83.

<sup>439</sup> Al-Sudairi, *A Vision of the Middle East*, 107.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 112–14.

But his most significant contribution to the Arab cause in Palestine was the preparation of the testimonials for the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (AACI).<sup>441</sup> Hourani himself made his appearance before the committee, arguing against the partition and advocating an independent Palestinian state ruled by its Arab majority. If the Arabs' demands were not fulfilled, he warned that the Arabs would turn away from the West for good.<sup>442</sup> For Hourani, the decision on Palestine was a pivotal moment in the relationship between the West and the Arab world. The future of Arab liberalism indeed depended on it, he believed. If the West frustrated Arab aspirations in Palestine, he warned that the Arabs might turn away from Western values.<sup>443</sup> This was a strong claim. However, it ignored that the many Arab nationalists, in particular those of Amin al-Husseini's ilk, hardly advocated for liberal values. Hourani was confronted with similar skepticism from the AACI, which he answered honestly. Thus, when the AACI inquired whether the spread of Arab nationalism would not pose a risk to the fair treatment of Jews in Arab countries and thus also in an Arab state in Palestine, Hourani admitted this risk.<sup>444</sup> Nevertheless, the Arabs achieved a limited victory when the AACI recommended a binational state instead of partition. Such a state would have been dominated by the more numerous Arabs. But the AACI also recommended extending the British mandate, postponing independence, and not relenting on Truman's promise to allow 100'000 Jewish refugees to immigrate to Palestine. The recommendations were never implemented and Britain instead chose to turn to the UN. The new UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was boycotted by the Arabs in Palestine. Hourani's previous work for the Arab Office was expanded and published by the Arab Office in London under the title 'The Future of Palestine', which was a forceful plea against partition.<sup>445</sup> After the defeat of the Arabs at the UN, Albert Hourani entered into academia and started what was to be an illustrious scholarly career.

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<sup>441</sup> Khalidi, "On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946."

<sup>442</sup> Al-Sudairi, *A Vision of the Middle East*, 116–21.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 120–21.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid., 122.



The Arab League office in London opened in the spring of 1945, with World War II still raging.<sup>446</sup> Like in the case of the Arab Office in Jerusalem, Musa Alami selected highly educated college graduates to staff the London Office. Its head was Edward Atiya, a Christian Lebanese, who had been educated in England and settled there. Anwar Nusseiby, Samir Shamma and AHC member Izzat Tannous assisted him.<sup>447</sup> Far more than its branch in the US, the Arab Office in London could build on already existing widespread opposition to Zionism and pro-Arab sentiment within elite circles. In August 1945, these native anti-Zionists formed the Committee for Arab Affairs (CAA) under the chairmanship of Edward Spears, a prominent British General and politician, who, in spite of or maybe because of his partially Jewish ancestry, was a lifetime opponent of Zionism.<sup>448</sup> The Arab Office closely cooperated with the CAA and even shared the same address with it. The CAA's purpose was to deflect attention from the Arab propaganda effort. In a conversation with Arab League president Abdul Rahman al-Azzam, Spears shared the idea that it was "*Important that money should not come directly from an Arab source so as not to seem as direct propaganda.*"<sup>449</sup> The Arab Office also enjoyed substantial sympathy among the foreign policy establishment. Thus, when the question of visas for the propagandists came up, the Colonial Office was in favor. The British Embassy in Washington also consulted with the Arab Office on the best ways to carry out propaganda.<sup>450</sup> This was because the interests of the moderate Arab nationalists, best typified by Musa Alami, head of the Arab Offices, and

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<sup>446</sup> Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 211.

<sup>447</sup> Tannous, *The Palestinians*, 371.

<sup>448</sup> Max Egremont, *Under Two Flags: The Life of Major-General Sir Edward Spears* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1997); Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 211–12.

<sup>449</sup> Edward Spears, "Letter to Abdel Rahman Bey Azzam," October 25, 1945, ESP 6.3; cited in Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 211.

<sup>450</sup> Miller, "The Other Side of the Coin: Arab Propaganda and the Battle against Zionism in London, 1937–48," 215.

the foreign policy establishment overlapped at this time. Both opposed the establishment of a Jewish state as well as the extremist policies of the Mufti.<sup>451</sup> The result was a common Arab-British propaganda effort against Zionism.

As was the case before the war, the Arabs did not only enjoy support from the foreign policy establishment and anti-Zionists, but also from hardened anti-Semites and fascists. In post-1945 Britain, the air was ripe with anti-Semitism. Many shared the outrage about the killing of British servicemen by Jewish paramilitary and terrorist groups like the Irgun and Lehi. The British League of Ex-Servicemen and Women, an anti-Semitic group headed by Jeffrey Hamm, a member of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, sought to exploit these sentiments. For this purpose, he made contact with the Arab Office in order to "*open their eyes to the general run of feeling in this country*" and propose a closer collaboration.<sup>452</sup> Hamm also contacted the Islamic Press LTD., which was part of a so-called Arab Information Service.<sup>453</sup> The Arabs seemed not to have been entirely opposed to the idea of working with the fascists. Thus, Hamm was invited to the Egyptian embassy. Another fascist colleague introduced Hamm to Musa Alami. This willingness to work with British fascists also extended to military matters. In view of the upcoming military confrontation with the Yishuv, the Arabs made an active effort to recruit foreign fighters and raise money in Britain and other Western countries. In this vein, Jamal Nasir, a member of the Arab Office, spoke to fascists in Hampstead, whereupon some of them volunteered to fight with the Arab Legion for "*killing Jews*".<sup>454</sup> The AHC also fundraised in non-Muslim countries, as it had done before the war.<sup>455</sup> Izzet Shawa, a member of the Palestine

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>452</sup> Graham Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black: Sir Oswald Mosley and the Resurrection of British Fascism after 1945* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 46.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 46–47.

<sup>455</sup> Joshua Landis, Eugene L. Rogan, and Avi Shlaim, *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 99, 104; David Malet, *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts*, 1 edition

Arab Political Mission in London, which was under the direct control of the AHC, bragged to the press that he had received more than four thousand applications from British volunteers who wished to fight for the Arabs in Palestine, which had been forwarded to the Arab League headquarters in Cairo.<sup>456</sup> This figure certainly needs to be taken with a grain of salt. Still, the American undercover journalist John Roy Carlson, who travelled Egypt and Palestine during the Israeli War of Independence, noted the presence of non-Arab foreign fighters, including some from Britain, in the ranks of the Arab armies invading Palestine.<sup>457</sup> The British were not the only foreign fighters. German volunteers hailed from the community of German Templars, which had been interned by the British after the start of World War II.<sup>458</sup> Members of the four Polish divisions, which had fought for the British and were stationed in Palestine, complemented the foreign volunteers on the Arab side.<sup>459</sup> This is a chapter of the war in Palestine which has still not been properly researched.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Under the guidance of Musa Alami and Cecil Hourani, the British supported the reconstitution of the AHC. There were several reasons for this. Among else, they believed that Zionism was a danger to the US-British relationship and sought to prevent a Jewish state in Palestine. For this reason, they intended to strengthen the Arab side in the upcoming struggle over the future of Palestine. The establishment of the Arab League in March 1945 provided the framework for conducting an extensive information campaign in Western countries on behalf of the Palestinians. The pillars of this

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(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 146; Khalidi, "On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946," 75–76.

<sup>456</sup> "Recruits to Aid Arabs - Volunteers in Britain," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 13, 1948; Malet, *Foreign Fighters*, 148.

<sup>457</sup> Carlson, *Cairo to Damascus*.

<sup>458</sup> Angelika Eder and Günter Gorschenek, *Israel und Deutschland: Voraussetzungen und Anfänge einer komplizierten Partnerschaft* (Katholische Akademie Hamburg, 2002), 64.

<sup>459</sup> Malet, *Foreign Fighters*, 148.

campaign were the Arab Offices, which were to be established in several capitals. In coordination with the Arab League, Musa Alami started building an international propaganda infrastructure in the West, the purpose of which was to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. At every stage, Alami enjoyed the support of the British for his propaganda preparations. At this time, the British were involved in their own campaigning against Zionism. Alami succeeded in recruiting well educated, gifted young Arab intellectuals, including Albert Hourani, for the job. However, the AHC did not prove to be the stable and cooperative body the British had hoped for, but rather turned into an instrument of Amin al-Husseini, who sought to dominate every aspect of the Arab struggle in Palestine, including propaganda. As a result, Alami was constantly undermined by Amin al-Husseini's supporters and the non-Hashemite Arab states, which worked to submit the offices to the authority of the AHC, a move which Alami opposed. As a result, his Arab Offices suffered from a shortage of funds. This power struggle led to the establishment of a parallel propaganda structure. One under the authority of Musa Alami, another under that of al-Husseini, creating an ineffective organizational structure. Despite these conflicts, the Arab Offices displayed remarkable activity and were able to achieve several successes. Thus, Hourani's appearance before the AACI made a positive impression, possibly influencing their final rejection of partition. However, the infighting contributed to the eventual failure of Arab propaganda in the West. After the UN vote for partition, the funds dried up and the Arab Offices were forced to close down. Arab propaganda in the West would take several years to recover from this blow.

## 4 The Campaign against a Jewish State in the United States

This chapter studies the activities of the states, organizations and individuals who sought to push US public opinion and foreign policy towards a neutral or negative stance regarding Zionism in the years between 1942 and 1948. In retrospect, this proved to be the decisive period of the struggle between Zionists and anti-Zionists. Both the Arabs and the Zionists recognized that the future of Palestine would be decided in the US. After the Biltmore conference in 1942, the Zionists intensified their political campaign to gain American support for the Jewish state in the US. The Arab League and the AHC on the other hand had established their own bodies to fight the battle against Zionism in the US. As in the period before 1939, the most powerful opponent of Zionism was the State Department and in particular its small core of Middle East experts. A number of geopolitical factors which the State Department sought to emphasize spoke against the Jewish state. Arab American anti-Zionists and the Arab League also got involved in the struggle over public opinion in the US. After the dissolution of the ANL, Philip Hitti took control of Arab-American anti-Zionist activism, establishing the Institute of Arab American Affairs (IAAA). The IAAA collaborated with anti-Zionist Jews, including the controversial Benjamin Freedman. Freedman's anti-Semitic rhetoric, but also the resurgence of the AHC under the authority of Amin al-Husseini and its work with the pro-Arab bodies in the US, strengthened Jewish and anti-fascist organizations like the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League (NSANL) in their conviction that the pro-Arab cause was fundamentally anti-Semitic. The Arab League invested most of its resources for propaganda in the US where it opened an Arab Office in 1945 as part of Musa Alami's network. Its functioning however was marred by continuous inter-Arab intrigues, and suspicions that it was associated with the AHC and collaborating with pro-Nazi elements. The struggle over the future of Palestine was meanwhile nearing its resolution when the British decided to hand over the question over the future of Palestine to the UN in February 1947. The UN recommended partition. The Arab States and the AHC sought to prevent this by extending their propaganda activity and warnings of war. Despite that, the UN endorsed a proposal to

partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The plan was endorsed by the Zionists but rejected by the Arabs. Amid the civil war engulfing Palestine, Protestant anti-Zionists started to lobby for a US withdrawal from partition. When the US ambassador to the UN made a statement in this direction in March 1948 it seemed that the lobby had been successful. However, Truman prevailed over the anti-Zionists in the State Department and recognized the Jewish State on May 14, 1948.

#### 4.1 The State Department and Zionism

World War II saw a considerable cooling down of the Palestine conflict. Most of the leaders of the AHC were in detention or in exile, while the Zionist executive pledged allegiance to the British war effort despite its deep opposition to the White Paper of 1939. This phase of calm came to an end in May 1942. At the Biltmore conference, more than 600 American and foreign Zionists resolved to demand the immediate establishment of a Jewish army to fight National Socialism and of a Jewish state in Palestine after the War. At the conference, Weizmann warned that the Nazi genocide against the Jews would destroy one fourth of Eastern European Jewry and that the survivors would need to be settled in Palestine. The Zionist cause also enjoyed significant parliamentary support. Reports on the Holocaust helped to gain sympathy for Zionism. A breakthrough occurred on December 4, 1942, when 63 senators and 181 representatives signed a resolution by Senator Wagner, which expressed support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine and the settling of Jewish refugees from Europe within its borders. In January 1944, a bipartisan resolution in the House and Congress, named the Wright-Compton resolution after its sponsors, called for unrestricted Jewish immigration and the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth after the war. The resolution is also sometimes referred to as the Wagner-Taft resolution after its sponsors in Congress.<sup>460</sup> The resolution was an important victory for American Zionism but drew protest from the Arabs, with the presidents of the Iraqi parliament comparing it to a declaration of war on Palestine's Arabs.<sup>461</sup> Opponents of the

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<sup>460</sup> Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 1st Edition edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2013), 243–58.

<sup>461</sup> Jamal Al-Mafdai, "Cable to Robert Taft from Iraqi Parliament," February 29, 1944, PHP 12.6; Jamal Al-Mafdai and Muhammad Ridha Shabibi, "Telegram to the

resolution, including a number of Arab-American and Jewish anti-Zionist activists, appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in February 1944.<sup>462</sup> The stiffest opposition however came from the State Department and the War Department, which was influenced by the former. This would be a pattern in the following years. Each political advance by Zionism would be opposed by the State Department. Its lobbying eventually succeeded in having the Wright-Compton resolution postponed.<sup>463</sup> However, this was a pyrrhic victory. After speaking with Roosevelt, in March 1944 Abba Hillel Silver released a statement by the president rejecting the White Paper and endorsing the emigration of refugees. In the presidential election campaign of November 1944 between Franklin Roosevelt and his challenger, Thomas Dewey, both parties ran on pro-Zionist platforms.

Opposition from the State Department against Zionism had been a persistent feature since the 1920s, as discussed in the previous chapter. During the 1940s, the State Department took on an active role in fighting American Zionism, both through official channels but also at times by lending support to anti-Zionist activists in the US. The Division of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), which was responsible for the Middle East and most of Africa, was renamed the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs in 1944. The Division of Near Eastern Affairs, which exclusively covered Palestine, the Levant and the Arab countries, became one of its three subdivisions. State Department Middle Eastern expertise at the time was formed by an extremely small circle. The total staff of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs was just twelve persons. Political appointees, like the Secretary of State, usually relied on these experts to make their decisions. Thus, this small circle had tremendous influence on US foreign policy in the Middle East. The NEA consisted of about five persons, but Wallace Murray, Paul H. Ailing and Gordon P. Merriam were the principal actors. The staff was marked by its permanence and by its similarity of backgrounds. From 1929 until June 1945, Wallace Murray served as the NEA and later Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs chief. Murray opposed Zionism, believing that Jewish loyalty to the US and support for

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Speaker of the House of Representatives from the Iraqi Parliament,” March 3, 1944, PHP 12.7.

<sup>462</sup> Faris S. Malouf, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” February 19, 1944, PHP 12.7.

<sup>463</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 255–58.

Zionism were irreconcilable. After leaving the State Department, he later joined the ACJ. His right-hand Paul H. Ailing had served as a foreign service officer in Beirut, Aleppo and Damascus, frequenting the American missionary circles in the region. The Arabic-speaking Gordon P. Merriam on the other hand had taught at Robert College in Istanbul in the 1920s and served at the same stations as a vice consul for a longer time in Cairo, as well as Lebanon and Syria. They formed a tight-knit group.

Although the NEA was certainly well acquainted with the region, its perspective was uniform, Arabo-centric and lacking diversity of thought. This was also reflected in the diplomatic infrastructure in the region. Thus, in contrast to other stations in the region and despite its superior strategic importance with regard to US interests in Palestine, the US consulate's staff size in Jerusalem remained unchanged during the war years. Moreover, none of the officers in the Foreign Service spoke Hebrew, while Arabic skills were emphasized. In the same vein, none of the State Department officials entrusted with formulating policy in the Middle East had an academic background in Jewish studies, while several had studied Oriental Islamic studies and Arabic. Foreign Service officers, who often served abroad, made up about half of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs. They tended to identify with the small, Western-educated Arab elite, with which they consorted. Among the ranks of these Arabists, as they were often called, were George Wadsworth, William Eddy, Harold B. Hoskins and Loy Henderson.<sup>464</sup> In their official as well as in their private lives, these persons fiercely opposed Zionism.

William Eddy, a former member of the American Friends of the Arabs, and his cousin Harold B. Hoskins worked for the OSS in the Middle East during the war. Both were instrumental in furthering US-Saudi relations, which Washington considered a strategic asset.<sup>465</sup> When Hoskins returned from the Middle East in late 1942, he reported to the State Department that Zionism was endangering American interests in the region. In response, the State Department introduced the idea of issuing a joint American-British statement on Middle Eastern policy, with Harold Hoskins being tasked with drafting it.

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<sup>464</sup> Phillip Jason Baram, *The Department of State in the Middle East: 1919-1945* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 67–72, 88–89.

<sup>465</sup> Hugh Wilford, *America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, 1 edition (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 60.



Behind the initiative stood Wallace Murray, who was in the opinion of Henry Morgenthau one of the State Department's worst anti-Semites. In July 1943, both the State Department and the Foreign Office agreed on a draft by Hoskins, which was set to prove controversial. In a passage obviously aimed against Zionist efforts, it stipulated that all public political activities in the US with regard to Palestine should cease. This was a clear infringement on constitutional rights. Furthermore, the draft demanded that the future political status of Palestine and the question of Jewish immigration should be dependent on Arab acquiescence. After the War Department withdrew its support for the draft and internal opposition grew, among others from Henry Morgenthau, the State Department retracted it – to the disappointment of the British Foreign Office.<sup>466</sup> However, Zionist activities within the country continued to irk the State Department. Under Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew complained to President Roosevelt in January 1945 that “*Zionist activities in this country will remain the gravest threat to friendly relations between the United States and the countries of the Near East.*”<sup>467</sup> Eddy also continued to work in Jidda, explaining the Arab view point to Washington and hoping to build a “*moral alliance*” between the Christian and the Muslim world. He was also close to Ibn Saud and translated during the meeting of Roosevelt with the Saudi monarch in February 1945. When the US voted for partition in November 1947, Eddy resigned from the State Department.<sup>468</sup>

Another prominent anti-Zionist was Stephen Penrose, who was responsible for intelligence collection on the Arab world at the OSS Cairo station together with his young assistant, Kermit Roosevelt. Penrose had been born in Lebanon to missionary parents and was strongly associated with the missionary educational enterprise, being also a member of the Near East College Association. He would later head the AUB

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<sup>466</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 252–54.

<sup>467</sup> United States Department of State, ed., *Diplomatic Papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa*, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), VIII (Washington D.C., 1969), 680, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1945v08.p0692&id=FRUS.FRUS1945v08&isize=text>.

<sup>468</sup> Baram, *The Department of State in the Middle East*, 76–77.

from 1948 until his death in 1954.<sup>469</sup> Typical for his circles, Penrose was also an ardent opponent of Zionism and a veteran of the anti-Zionist 'American Friends of the Arabs', a group which had been active in the late 1930s, as discussed above. In 1942, he helped organize the opposition against the initiatives to set up a Jewish army to fight National Socialism. However, he was mindful of covering his tracks, as he told a likeminded anti-Zionist friend: *"Some very potent stuff is brewing in opposition to the Zionist (...). Although I am one of the chief cooks, I shall not appear in the dining room."*<sup>470</sup> Penrose would continue to torpedo Zionism.

Loy Henderson, the NEA chief from 1945 until 1948, was the most controversial of the State Department Arabists. Henderson was not an Arabist in the strictest sense, but an expert on Eastern Europe by training, who came to the Middle East at a relatively late stage in his career. US. Congressman Arthur G. Klein of New York, accused him of having been *"working, with fanatical zeal, for a backward and decayed [pro-Arab] policy-out of conviction (..). This man Henderson has a foreign policy of his own, based on such deep-seated prejudices and biases that he functions as a virtual propagandist."*<sup>471</sup> In retrospect, Henderson was not ashamed of the criticism he received, but was rather proud of the fact that his office allegedly *"received sometimes 200 to 500 letters a week against me"*.<sup>472</sup>

Henderson's career shows some parallels with those of Charles Crane, the sponsor of anti-Zionist activism in the 1930s. Like Crane, Henderson started his career on the international stage in Russia, volunteering for the Red Cross at the end of World War I and witnessing Imperial Russia's collapse. After his return to the US, he joined the ranks of the State Department as a Soviet expert. One of his first missions was to

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<sup>469</sup> Richard Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 115.

<sup>470</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, *A Sentimental Safari*, 1st edition (Alfred A Knopf, 1963), vii–viii; via Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 58.

<sup>471</sup> Allen H. Podet, "Anti-Zionism in a Key United States Diplomat: Loy Henderson at the End of World War 11'," *American Jewish Archives* 30 (1977): 181–82.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

investigate the collaboration between US left-wing organizations and the Comintern. At one point, Henderson expressed intensive dislike for New York, the city often identified with American-Jewish culture. Henderson, like Crane, associated Jews with Communism. In a diplomatic cable, he blamed “*international Jewry*” for supporting Stalinism.<sup>473</sup> Indeed, there were many Jewish intellectuals among the left-wing apologists of the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s. The most influential pro-Soviet voice in the US liberal camp however, the Soviet correspondent for the *New York Times*, Walter Duranty, was not Jewish.<sup>474</sup> Nor were the owners of the *New York Times*, the Sulzberger family, particularly pro-Jewish or Zionist. The truth was in fact closer to the opposite. During World War II, the *New York Times* did its best to play down the Holocaust.<sup>475</sup> Its editor, Arthur Sulzberger, was an opponent of Zionism and a supporter of the anti-Zionist ACJ. As a witness to Soviet brutality, the purges and the oppression of Poland, Henderson became a committed enemy of the Soviet Union, influencing the stance of the later Wise Men George F. Kennan, Acheson, and Lovett as well as others. After assuming the position of Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs in March 1943, the Soviets warned that Henderson was harming relations between the two countries.<sup>476</sup> As a result, he was transferred from Moscow to Bagdad in 1943, where he served as the US ambassador. Although he came to symbolize the quintessential pro-Arab, anti-Jewish Arabist, he was then already 51, only spending the later years of his career in the Middle East and never learning Arabic. The Jews of Baghdad had suffered a horrible pogrom in June 1941, known as the Farhud. The pogromists had been instigated by anti-Semitic propaganda and the actions of the Arab Palestinian exiles in Baghdad around the Mufti, who blamed the Jews for the failure of Rashid Ali al-Gaylani’s anti-British coup in April 1941.<sup>477</sup> Despite

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<sup>473</sup> Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 88–90.

<sup>474</sup> S. J. Taylor, *Stalin’s Apologist: Walter Duranty: The New York Times’s Man in Moscow* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1990).

<sup>475</sup> Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>476</sup> Podet, “Anti-Zionism in a Key United States Diplomat,” 165.

<sup>477</sup> Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, 309.

this, Henderson felt little compassion for Iraq's Jews, blaming their sympathies for Zionism, "*the public dishonesty, profiteering and greed of some of the Jewish merchants*" and their feeling of social and cultural superiority for the violence against them.<sup>478</sup> Thus, Henderson unquestionably was not free from anti-Semitism.

Even when working in Baghdad, his dispatches to Washington show that Henderson remained primarily concerned with the Soviet threat. Unfamiliar with the local language, he saw Soviet expansionism and intrigue as the central issue in the Middle East, and he believed that Zionism was helping the Soviets to achieve their goals.<sup>479</sup> After two years in Baghdad, Henderson assumed the directorship of the State Department's Office for Near Eastern Affairs in 1945. Not sympathetic to Jews in the first place, he was convinced that supporting the Jewish state was unwise on the background of the threat of Soviet expansion in the Middle East. The strategic importance of the Arabs was crushingly superior and acting against their interests would disadvantage the US in the upcoming Cold War, risking the "*rise of fanatic Mohammedism*."<sup>480</sup> The statements of Arab statesmen, in particular the Saudis, warning of a rapid deterioration of US-Arab relations should the US support the Jewish state, fueled this conviction. Henderson was not exemplary in this regard. Rather, he just expressed what was seen as common sense at that time in the foreign policy and intelligence circles. Thus, when the Americans tried to push the Saudi King Abdul Aziz to a more moderate position in 1945, the desert king answered them: "*As to Palestine, America and Britain have a free choice between an Arab land of peace and quiet or a Jewish Land drenched in blood. We do not ask for the removal of Jews; those who are there may stay, but there must be no more. (...) If America should choose in favor of the Jews, who are accursed in the Koran as enemies of the Muslims until the end of*

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<sup>478</sup> Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 94.

<sup>479</sup> Podet, "Anti-Zionism in a Key United States Diplomat," 173–74.

<sup>480</sup> Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 95.

*the world, it will indicate to us that America has repudiated her friendship with us and this we should regret.*"<sup>481</sup>

Beside the NEA staff in Washington and the Foreign Service officers, a third group was important in shaping US Middle East policy. The members of this group included Dr. Philipp W. Ireland and Professor William Yale, who left their academic posts in 1942 to join the planning staff for the post-war order of the Middle East. They were assisted by a team, which included Halford L. Hoskins and others. Ireland had worked as a teacher at the AUB in the 1920s. He then pursued an academic career as a professor for Middle Eastern history at Harvard and other universities. He also shared the consensus anti-Zionist view in the NEA. But a former colleague also remembered him as an anti-Semite, who liked to compare Zionism to National Socialism during meetings. William Yale on the other hand was a veteran diplomat, whose stance toward Zionism was more complicated. We remember that he had signed the minority report of the King-Crane commission, which had rejected the pan-Syrian recommendations of the majority report. He also tended to sympathize with Sephardic Jews and the assimilated elite of German American Jews. However, he abhorred the religious and more politically conscious Eastern European Jews, who formed the strong base of Zionism. Like his colleagues, he was convinced that the State Department had to defend American interests from the machinations of the Zionists. Like Ireland, Yale compared Zionism to National Socialism. His anti-Zionism had terrible consequences. Like other State Department officials, he did nothing during the war to put plans, which sought to settle Jewish children in Palestine to help them escape from the Holocaust into action, since he believed that these efforts were bound to strengthen Zionism. The State Department also shared the Palestine mandatory government's view that the refugees were basically a ploy by Hitler to drive a wedge between the British and the Arabs. Thus, only by the extremely low standards of the State Department he could be considered a fair arbiter of the Palestine issue. However, unlike the majority of Middle East experts in the State Department, he did not advocate

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<sup>481</sup> William A. Eddy, "The Minister of Saudi Arabia to the Secretary of State," February 1, 1945, FRUS 867N.01/2–145; in United States Department of State, *Diplomatic Papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa*, 687.

an Arab national state, but a binational state.<sup>482</sup> Given the composition of the NEA and its biases, it is clear that Zionism never enjoyed a fair hearing.

In January 1942, the American consul in Jerusalem General L. Pinkerton reported to Washington that Britain was not enforcing its pro-Arab policy in Palestine sufficiently for fear of challenging American Zionist influence. In consequence, the NEA made a study of American Zionism, concluding that it represented only a small, but organized minority in the face of a conservative, more passive Jewish majority, which was open to compromises, but not as well organized. The political progress Zionism was making in the US since the Biltmore conference in May 1942 put this assessment into question and hardened the State Department's opposition. Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles recommended that the British embassy should conduct an information campaign in the US against demands to raise a Jewish army to fight Hitler.<sup>483</sup> The British Foreign Office later directly involved itself in the public debate on Zionism, being concerned that Zionist activities were detrimental to the Anglo-US relations and were jeopardizing the common war effort. They were especially worried by the public outrage over the White Paper, which allowed only a small number of Jewish refugees to find safety in Palestine. Thus, in October 1944, the British Ambassador to Washington Earl of Halifax warned that the "*Zionist campaign (...) could affect the outcome on the lend-lease settlement and a dollar loan.*"<sup>484</sup> The young Isaiah Berlin was then working at the British Embassy in Washington, sharing these worries. He therefore proposed to send Freya Stark on a speaking tour of the US. The obvious aim behind the plan was to strengthen the pro-Arab camp and challenge the Zionist campaign. Freya Stark was a known supporter of the Arab cause, with critics calling her an "*Arabophile*".<sup>485</sup> Prior to her trip to the US, she visited Palestine to get an impression of the situation in the country, but showed no interest in meeting with the Jewish Agency or hearing their

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<sup>482</sup> Baram, *The Department of State in the Middle East*, 82–86, 260–61.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 263–66.

<sup>484</sup> Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945-51*, First American edition edition (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), 137; cited in Khalidi, "On Albert Hourani, the Arab Office, and the Anglo-American Committee of 1946," 69.

<sup>485</sup> Albert, "The Wartime" Special Relationship", 1941—45."

point of view.<sup>486</sup> The State Department was obviously less worried about foreign propaganda on US soil than about the activities of the American Zionists.

The Biltmore conference in May 1942 also provoked an answer from the Reform-Jewish anti-Zionist forces within American Judaism. In June 1942, they formed the American Council for Judaism (ACJ).<sup>487</sup> Although a decidedly anti-Zionist body, they were primarily concerned with what they considered to be the danger of Zionism to the integrity of Judaism and not the Arab cause. They cannot therefore be strictly considered a pro-Arab body, although their executive, Elmer Berger, repeatedly liaised with Arab activists.<sup>488</sup> Many State Department officials looked favorably upon the increasing activity of the Jewish anti-Zionists. Besides weakening Zionism, the Jewish anti-Zionists had the additional advantage of shielding non-Jewish anti-Zionists from accusations of anti-Semitism. If Jews opposed the establishment of a Jewish state, opposition from non-Jews could not be anti-Semitic after all. One of the first to identify the usefulness of the Jewish anti-Zionists was William Yale. In March 1942, not yet working for the State Department, he encouraged the dissident anti-Zionist Jewish faction, which was opposed to the establishment of a Jewish fighting force and would form the core of the ACJ, in a letter to Morris Lazaron: “*A thoroughly aroused American Jewry can best check the unbridled activities of the political Zionists.*”<sup>489</sup> In September 1942, William Yale further suggested to the State Department that they contact anti-Zionist Jews in the US and Britain to build a front against Zionists. These plans however were not further pursued. Still, the State Department liaised with the ACJ and the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee through Morris Rosenwald and Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, who kept it updated on the current developments within

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<sup>486</sup> B. Joseph, “Letter to Arthur Lourie,” July 29, 1943, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>487</sup> Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 47.

<sup>488</sup> Elmer Berger, “Memoirs of an Anti-Zionist Jew,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, no. 1/2 (1975): 24–25, doi:10.2307/2535682; Robert S. Wistrich, “Zionism and Its Jewish ‘Assimilationist’ Critics (1897-1948),” *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (1998): 110–11.

<sup>489</sup> Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews against Zionism*, 42.

American Zionism and occasionally sought to use them to undermine the Jewish consensus.<sup>490</sup> The Jewish anti-Zionists were generally motivated by a fear that a muscular pro-Jewish and pro-Zionist advocacy would result in an anti-Semitic backlash, disregarding the fact that US anti-Semitism usually targeted the assimilated, established Jewry to which most anti-Zionists belonged.<sup>491</sup> The State Department would continue to occasionally lend direct support to anti-Zionist groups in the US, both Jewish and non-Jewish, in the following years, as further discussed below.

Besides the fear of Communist penetration of the Middle East and the need to keep the Arabs in the Allied camp during the war, a third issue became increasingly important in the geopolitical considerations of the State Department, all of which weighed against Zionism. This was petroleum, which became a strategic asset during World War II. Its continued procurement necessitated the establishment of friendly relations with the oil-producing states. In 1941, there were the first warnings within the administration that the US was turning from an exporter to an importer of oil. A study for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1943 estimated that the size of the reserves in the gulf countries was almost three times as high as that of the US, with Saudi Arabia possessing the largest share.<sup>492</sup> After the war, the importance of Middle Eastern oil even increased. The Americans planned to supply Europe with it to boost its economy recovery and prevent a Soviet encroachment.<sup>493</sup> This awarded Saudi Arabia and Aramco, the Saudi subsidiary of Standard Oil of California, paramount influence on the strategic calculations of the US. Aramco was keen on conserving the good nature of US-Arab relations and, since 1937, had warned the State Department that American support for Zionism would endanger the US position in the Middle East. In particular, the relationship with Saudi Arabia and the oil concession would be at risk. In the late

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<sup>490</sup> Baram, *The Department of State in the Middle East*, 268, 285.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>492</sup> I. H. Anderson, *Aramco, the United States, and Saudi Arabia: A Study of the Dynamics of Foreign Oil Policy, 1933-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 37–38.

<sup>493</sup> Michael Joseph Cohen, *Truman and Israel* (University of California Press, 1990), 94.



1940s, Aramco's vice president James T. Duce spoke regularly with the top echelon of the State Department. He was particularly close to the Department of Near Eastern and African Affairs and Loy Henderson, who served as its head from 1945 until 1948.<sup>494</sup> However, unlike in the case of the Zionists, there was no urgent need for oil companies to raise awareness among the public for their cause because both Henderson and the Secretary of Defense, James W. Forrestal, agreed with their stance. Forrestal had been convinced since 1943 that Saudi oil was of crucial strategic importance to the US.<sup>495</sup> William 'Bill' Eddy was one of the chief engineers of the Saudi-US alliance. In 1943, he was dispatched to Saudi Arabia to gain the trust and deepen the relationship with Ibn Saudi. He helped to set up a new airbase next to Aramco's American Camp.<sup>496</sup> The Zionists looked upon the appointment with apprehension, as Eddy was an AUB graduate and a known friend of the Arabs. They therefore qualified his appointment as a further win for the anti-Zionist pro-Arab camp within the State Department.<sup>497</sup> They were not wrong. He indeed proved to be a fierce opponent of the establishment of a Jewish state in the coming years. President Roosevelt sought to mediate between US support for Zionism and its interests in Saudi Arabia. Before his meeting with the Saudi King on the USS *Quincy* on February 14, 1945, he had been warned by the State Department that the Saudi ruler was a rabid and uncompromising anti-Semite. Nevertheless, Roosevelt tried to convince him of the moral plight of the Jews and of the pioneering role the Jews could play in the Middle Eastern economy. The Saudi King did not budge, stating that any compromise would be "*an act of treachery to the Prophet and all believing Muslims which would out my honor and destroy my soul.*"<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Michael J. Cohen, "William A. Eddy, the Oil Lobby and the Palestine Problem," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 1 (1994): 166–68.

<sup>495</sup> Anderson, *Aramco, the United States, and Saudi Arabia*, 170–71.

<sup>496</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 60.

<sup>497</sup> אליהו אילת, המאבק על המדינה : וושינגטון 1945-1948 / (תל אביב : עם עובד והספריה 52–51, (1979), תשמ"ג, 82, (1979), תש"ם, הציונית, תש"ם, (Eliahu Elath: The Struggle for Statehood, Washington 1945-1948).

<sup>498</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 302–3.

American Zionists were acutely aware that the question of oil posed a serious challenge to their movement's aspirations. They therefore sought to reconcile American oil interests in the Middle East with Zionist policy in Palestine. In the period between 1943 and 1945, leading Zionist activists held a number of talks with oil company representatives and government officials. They argued that the oil-producing Arab states would be dependent on American know-how for exploration despite the disagreement over Zionism, warning that the oil company's anti-Zionist policy may harm their image. After the war, the Zionist emergency council prepared a campaign, which at first sought to convey that there was no need for Middle Eastern oil. Eventually, they recognized that the oil company's propaganda for cheap Middle Eastern oil to supply the downtrodden European continent carried the day. Adapting their message, they campaigned for a pipeline connecting Israel to Haifa, which would help to integrate Israel economically into the region. The nascent Jewish state, a loyal friend to the United States would provide for better security.<sup>499</sup> These efforts by the American Zionist leadership to use oil politics as a means for Arab-Jewish reconciliation were looked upon critically by the Yishuv's leadership, in particular Ben Gurion, who considered them uninformed and naïve, as well as meddling in matters beyond their concern.<sup>500</sup> However, it seems questionable that the US dependence on Middle Eastern oil had any effect on the State Department. Both before and after 1943, there was an anti-Zionist consensus within its ranks. The oil issue only complemented the anti-Zionist arguments. Moreover, the State Department interpreted the US economic and strategic interests in the region in a very narrow, distorted way, which did not take into account the significant economic interests of Jewish Americans. Until the 1940s, the bulk of American private capital was invested in Palestine, where nearly 80 percent of US citizens in the region were living. This fact appears to have had no effect on the State Department's strategic considerations.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Zohar Segev, "Struggle for Cooperation and Integration: American Zionists and Arab Oil, 1940s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 5 (September 1, 2006): 821–23, doi:10.1080/00263200600828089.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., 827–28.

<sup>501</sup> Baram, *The Department of State in the Middle East*, 323; Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, 88.

With the victory against Nazi Germany, the question of the future of Palestine resurfaced with verve. The British White Paper, which had introduced a strict quota on Jewish immigration and de facto rendered obsolete the promise of Jewish statehood, had come under criticism by the Truman administration already during the war years. Like the Zionist leaders had warned before the onset of the Nazi genocide, it had contributed to the hardships of the European Jews by blocking their escape route to Palestine. Now, the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors lingering in camps in Europe, and US pressure to allow for their immigration to Palestine only increased the sense that a continuation of the White Paper was untenable. On November 13, 1945, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin eventually announced the creation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (AACI). Based on an investigation of the situation of the Jewish refugees and on hearings with experts and Arab and Jewish representatives in Palestine, it was to “*make recommendations [...] for ad interim handling of these problems as well as for their permanent solution.*”<sup>502</sup> The Arabs denied any connection between the refugee issue and the political settlement in Palestine. The statement and the possibility of a lifting of the White Paper, which it is important to note they had initially opposed at its inception in 1939, already signified a political defeat.

Both the State Department and the Foreign Office feared Soviet penetration of the Middle East. They also opposed a Jewish state and they believed that both questions were related. NEA assistant chief Evan warned the committee members in one of his briefings that, should the final report be too pro-Jewish, “*an aroused Arab world might turn to the Soviet Union for support.*”<sup>503</sup> They therefore took steps to steer the AACI in the direction they wanted. All AACI members were unacquainted with the Palestine issue. The committee therefore was dependent on an extensive staff, numbering 26 persons excluding the 12 elected officials. Despite their efforts to avoid partisanship, the staff included dedicated anti-Zionists. Harald Beeley, an Arabist with the Eastern

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<sup>502</sup> Haim Levenberg, *Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945-1948* (Psychology Press, 1993), 4

<sup>503</sup> Allen Howard Podet, *The Success and Failure of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945-1946 : Last Chance in Palestine*, Jewish Studies (Lewiston (N.Y.): Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 192.

Department of the Foreign Office, was appointed as one of the two principal secretaries of the research and information staff, an influential position. Beeley had acted as the principal advisor to the Foreign Office on Palestine and had published a survey on the issue of Palestine in 1938, which was criticized as anti-Zionist by Lewis Bernstein Namier, a prominent British historian and Zionist activist. Loy Henderson proposed William Eddy as the second research secretary. The committee was kept in the dark about his post as minister to Saudi Arabia and only told that he was of missionary stock. Still, this sufficed to raise McDonald's suspicions, as he was well aware that most diplomats with this background shared a pro-Arab and anti-Zionist outlook. This was quickly revealed to be true in the subsequent interview, and Eddy's application was rejected. In his stead, William F. Stinespring, professor of the Old Testament at Duke University, a personal acquaintance of McDonald, was selected. However, Stinespring was not as unprejudiced as the committee believed. In 1940, after spending more than three years at the American School for Oriental Research in Jerusalem, he published an article in which he blamed the Zionists for the Arab-Jewish conflict. The only possible solution lay in the Jews accepting a permanent minority status in Palestine, he asserted. Crum and McDonald only learned about these statements after Stinespring's appointment, accusing the State Department of deceiving them by telling them that Stinespring had never expressed himself with regard to the Palestine question.<sup>504</sup>

Despite these efforts to influence the AACI, the conclusion it presented on April 22, 1946 after a four-month inquiry flew in the face of the State Department. Among its recommendations was the admission of 100'000 Jewish refugees to Palestine. Britain rejected the report. However, in a statement on October 4, 1946, Truman for the first time openly endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state and supported the admittance of Jewish refugees to Palestine. This was a crucial moment in the eventual triumph of Zionism. It is also recognized as such in anti-Zionist historiography. Based on a newspaper story, which was first published in the *New York Times* on October 7, 1946, Kermit Roosevelt argued that the Truman statement was the result of domestic pressure. The two Democratic runners for the posts of Governor and Senator of New York, James M. Mead and Herbert H. Lehman, expected their Republican contender

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid., 115–24.

Thomas Dewey to make a pro-Zionist statement. They felt at risk of losing the pro-Zionist vote and therefore urged President Truman to forestall such an outcome by making a statement by himself.<sup>505</sup> Even after the Truman Statement, the State Department continued to work against the establishment of a Jewish state, although it was now official government policy. In February 1947, the British decided to relegate the decision on the future of Palestine to the UN. After investigating the situation, the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended partition, which the UN General Assembly accepted on November 29, 1947. In the following months, the State Department lobbied intensively to roll back the decision.

Practically the entire US national security and foreign policy establishment opposed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. This group included the so-called Wise Men, the shapers behind US policy in the nascent Cold War. All ascribed major strategic importance to maintaining good relations with the oil-rich Arab states against the backdrop of the upcoming Cold War and were certain that support for a Jewish state would antagonize them.<sup>506</sup> Many had become convinced from firsthand experience in the region that the Arabs were implacable enemies of Zionism and that there was no chance for a settlement.<sup>507</sup> Truman reflected on this period in his memoirs: *"There were some men in the State Department who held the view that the Balfour Declaration could not be carried out without offense to the Arabs. Like most of the British diplomats, some of our diplomats also thought that the Arabs, on account of their numbers and because of the fact that they controlled such immense oil resources, should be appeased. I am sorry to say that there were some among them who were also inclined to be anti-Semitic."*<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, "The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics," *Middle East Journal* 2, no. 1 (1948): 12.

<sup>506</sup> Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*, 85.

<sup>507</sup> Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama (Kindle)* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), ll. 503–527.

<sup>508</sup> Harry Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope: Memoirs By Harry S. Truman: Volume Two: 1946-1952* (Doubleday, 1956), 164.

Another actor in the effort to roll back partition was the oil lobby. Through its access to the State Department, but also its links to anti-Zionist NGOs, Aramco had the means at its disposal to do so. Terry Duce was on the board of the anti-Zionist Committee for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land, which will be discussed below. According to a pro-Zionist source, the group also received money from Aramco.<sup>509</sup> Another access point was Philip Hitti, who offered training for Aramco's staff in his center in Princeton. A more efficient way to gain influence within the administration however was by recruiting the State Department's Middle East experts, as Aramco did with William Eddy and Halford Hoskins, as well as others. These figures were able to directly access senior government officials and they did so regularly. In September 1947, Eddy wrote to Secretary of State George Marshall that the prospective Jewish state would be a *"theocratic sovereign state characteristic of the Dark Ages"*.<sup>510</sup> This statement seems a little ironic, given his friendship with the Saudi monarchy. One month later, in October of 1947, he resigned from government services and became a consultant for Aramco. Halford Hoskins, equally an Arabist by background and expertise, joined the latter in 1948 in leaving the government services and working with Aramco in a senior managerial function.<sup>511</sup>

At times, the State Department seems to have exaggerated the risks of harming the relations with the Arabs on purpose, ignoring that the Arabs never credibly threatened to cut off the supply of oil, an act which would have harmed them more at the time than the US. Already in December 1947, the Saudis promised that they would not break relations with the US.<sup>512</sup> During the crucial period between the UN partition decision on November 29, 1947 and the establishment of Israel in May 1948, Eddy and Hoskins' alarmist reports were read in the State Department and the DOD. In January 1948 moreover, William Eddy was invited to meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and asked to author an analysis of Truman's Palestine policy. The resulting report glaringly warned of the consequences of US support for the establishment of a Jewish state, which

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<sup>509</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 91.

<sup>510</sup> Cohen, "William A. Eddy, the Oil Lobby and the Palestine Problem," 168.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid., 167–69.

<sup>512</sup> Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, 95–96.

included a loss of the oil concession. At the same time, in January 1948, Hoskins and Terry Duce also sent reports to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department, which warned of the same scenario and Communist penetration of the Middle East.<sup>513</sup> The efforts to dismantle partition eventually failed. In retrospect, Truman felt that some officials in the State Department had sabotaged his government by pursuing their own policy instead: *“Now that the Jews were ready to proclaim the State of Israel, however, I decided to move at once and give American recognition to the new nation. (...) I was told that to some of the career men of the State Department this announcement came as a surprise. It should not have been if these men had faithfully supported my policy. The difficulty with many career officials in the government is that they regard themselves as the men who really make policy and run the government. They look upon the elected officials as just temporary occupants.”*<sup>514</sup> Truman’s recognition of Israel however did not mean the end of the State Department’s opposition to Zionism and the newly established Jewish state, Israel.

#### 4.2 Arab-American Opposition to Zionism and the Institute of Arab American Affairs

With the liquidation of the ANL in 1942, there was no Arab-American anti-Zionist body active in the US for the first time in 25 years. With the hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on the pro-Zionist Wright-Compton resolution in February 1944, a new opportunity presented itself for the Arab-American anti-Zionists to voice their critique. While Emanuel Neumann, Rabbi Stephen Wise and Louis Lipsky of the ZOA recommend the adoption of the resolution, the anti-Zionist’s side also had a strong presence during the hearings, with contributions from Morris Lazon of the ACJ, Faris Malouf, Philipp Hitti and others.<sup>515</sup> Unquestionably, Philip Hitti, who spoke on the second day, made the biggest impression on the committee members. He opened his presentation with a compliment, stating that *“No Westerner (...) is more highly respected and more*

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid., 97–99.

<sup>514</sup> Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 164–65.

<sup>515</sup> Malouf, “Letter to Philip Hitti.”

*implicitly trusted by the Arab and Moslem people than the American.*"<sup>516</sup> This, Hitti argued was the product of the missionary enterprise in the Middle East, which was threatened by the US sympathy for Zionism in general and by the Wright-Compton resolution in particular. Moreover, the resolution would give fodder to German propaganda and threaten the stability of the post-war world order. Hitti adduced several other arguments against Zionism. Thus, he claimed that the British had never intended to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, which would naturally infringe on the rights of the native Arabs. Many of them were descendants of the Canaanites, he claimed, and arrived in Palestine before the Jews. Linking the Zionists to the Crusaders, he predicted that the Jewish state would share the fate of the Latin states and had no chance of survival in a sea of Arab and Muslim people. The Muslims, who had gained the country through Jihad, would never again relinquish it. Lastly, the Jewish problem was not the responsibility of the Arabs, who were largely free from anti-Jewish prejudice.<sup>517</sup> His statements were discussed by friends and foes alike, underlining their impact. Among his critics was his Princeton colleague, Albert Einstein. He criticized Hitti's "*racial genealogy*" of the Palestinians as descendants of the Canaanites as "*entirely hypothetical and precarious at that. (...) Besides, as we have pointed out before, this whole issue of priority counts for nothing in the actual apportionment of our globe and in the presence of our most urgent contemporary problems.*"<sup>518</sup> Einstein further contended that Hitti purposefully ignored the continued Jewish history in Palestine

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<sup>516</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti, "Testimony of Philip K. Hitti before Committee of House of Representatives on Foreign Affairs" (Washington, D.C., February 15, 1944), PHP 12.7; see also Special To The New York Times, "POLITICAL ZIONISTS' ARE HIT AT HEARING; Professor Hitti Calls Palestine Plan Undemocratic -- Wise Says Arabs Don't Aid Us," *The New York Times*, February 16, 1944, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9C03E5D6103CE03ABC4E52DFB466838F659EDE&login=google&legacy=true>.

<sup>517</sup> Hitti, "Testimony of Philip K. Hitti before Committee of House of Representatives on Foreign Affairs"; see also Times, "POLITICAL ZIONISTS' ARE HIT AT HEARING; Professor Hitti Calls Palestine Plan Undemocratic -- Wise Says Arabs Don't Aid Us."

<sup>518</sup> Albert Einstein and Eric Kahler, "Arabs Fare Better in Palestine than in Arab Countries," *Princeton Herald*, April 28, 1944, PHP 12.4.



throughout the time since the last Jewish revolt under Bar Kokhba and sought to present the Jewish presence as a mere intermezzo.<sup>519</sup>

As detailed in the last chapter, Hitti had established his reputation as the most prominent and gifted advocate of the Arab cause in the US long before the committee hearings. Through his Princeton institute, he maintained excellent relations with the State Department, the missionary schools and the oil industry. The employees of Aramco took their Arabic classes at his institute and he was in contact with James Terry Duce, the vice-president of Aramco, who harbored sympathies for the Arab cause. Hitti also did translation work for Aramco.<sup>520</sup> Moreover, together with Halford Hoskins, Harry Roscoe Snyder and other leading Arabists of missionary extraction, he sat on the trustee committee of the AUB.<sup>521</sup> In 1944, Philip Hitti was making plans to found a *“national organization in the United States which will serve the best interests of our people and native lands”*.<sup>522</sup> For this purpose, a provisional committee was set up in the autumn of 1944, consisting of Hitti, Faris Malouf and four other persons. The committee planned to hold a meeting to which representatives of the Arab organizations from the US and Canada were invited. The agenda of the meeting was threefold: To elaborate strategies to improve relations with the Arab world, to discuss the problems of the Arab-American communities, which also included Zionism and lastly, to set up a national bureau of information. The meeting, which took place on the weekend of November 25 and 26, 1944, in New York, resulted in the establishment of the Institute of Arab American Affairs.<sup>523</sup> The leadership and members consisted of distinguished Arab-Americans, which was proudly acknowledged by the organization. In a leaflet, the IAAA advertised that many of its members were graduates of the

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> James Terry Duce and Arabian American Oil Company, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” May 31, 1944, PHP 9.11; J.B. McComb and Arabian American Oil Company, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” March 13, 1945, PHP 9.11.

<sup>521</sup> “Trustees of the American University of Beirut.”

<sup>522</sup> Faris S. Malouf, “Letter to Jabir Shibli,” November 14, 1944, PHP 12.6.

<sup>523</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti et al., “Newsletter of the Provisional Committee,” November 1, 1944, PHP 12.6.

American University of Beirut.<sup>524</sup> Hitti initially served as its executive director, with Ismail R. Kahlidi, the brother of the former Jerusalem mayor and prominent Palestinian politician Hussein Khalidi, and Farhat Ziadeh working as the Arabic and English secretary of the institute. They were later replaced by James Daher, Omar Haliq and James Batal. Faris Malouf officiated as the IAAA's president, being succeeded after one year by John G. Hazam, a history professor at City College New York.<sup>525</sup> Despite its name, in purpose and composition the IAAA functioned as a successor organization of the ANL, dedicating the bulk of its efforts to the issue of Palestine and not to Arab-American matters.

As is to be expected, Hitti's pro-Arab and anti-Zionist activism was not embraced by all scholars in his field of Oriental studies. In 1945, an interesting exchange took place between him and the eminent Palestinian Jewish scholar Shlomo Dov Goitein from the Hebrew University on the Palestine issue. Goitein opened the exchange of letters in January 1945, lauding Hitti for his research on Syrian immigrants in the US. He raised objections to Arab anti-Zionism: *"If the Arabs – as we all believe – are going to become again a great nation, they have also the responsibility of great nations. The Jewish case, as the events of the last ten years have shown, need some solution. So the Arabs it seems have also to contribute to it. (...) the efforts of the Arabs are being led into a direction, where there is no greatness, no pursuing of national interest."*<sup>526</sup> Hitti did not respond to the criticism, but instead accused the Zionists of spreading *"half-truths"* about the Arabs in their US campaign. The response also shows how Hitti, like other Arab anti-Zionist activists, was preoccupied with the notion of international Jewish power and financial might. *"Thanks to this highly financed internationally organized propaganda, the American public is not even conscious of the fact that there is another*

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<sup>524</sup> "The Institute of Arab-American Affairs - Its Aims and Accomplishments" (New York: The Institute of Arab American Affairs, 1947).

<sup>525</sup> Khalil Totah, "My Four and a Half Years in New York," in *A Passion for Learning: The Life Journey of Khalil Totah, a Palestinian Quaker Educator and Activist*, ed. Joy Totah Hilden (Xlibris, 2016), l. 6392; "PROF. JOHN G. HAZAM OF C.C.N.Y. FACULTY," *The New York Times*, June 20, 1951, sec. Archives, 289.

<sup>526</sup> Shlomo Dov Goitein, "To Philippe Hitti," January 9, 1945, PHP 5.2.

*side of the question.*<sup>527</sup> In his response, Goitein conceded to Hitti that some American Zionists may indeed be too outspoken and ill-informed on the issue. However, he asked Hitti to take a more conciliatory approach to the issue. The scholar further lamented that the voices of Zionist moderates were being exploited by the Arabs for their cause, without taking a more moderate approach themselves: *"Men like Dr. Magnes have an extremely difficult, if not impossible stand, if their words are used by the other side only to corroborate a preaching of the Muslim Jihad."*<sup>528</sup> In particular, he argued, Arab nationalism had to make concessions to the right of the Palestinian Jews for self-determination: *"One cannot expect that such a community [as the Yishuv] suffers to be swallowed up by a [Arab] state which denies it the very right of existence."*<sup>529</sup> In his response, Hitti accused Goitein of having implied that he was preaching Jihad. However, only a very malicious reading of the Goitein letter allows for such an interpretation. One cannot escape the impression that Hitti was evading an honest discussion about the nature of Zionism and Arab nationalism. Again, he also made an effort to direct the conversation towards the US: *"Do you and your Zionist friends insist that all avenues of information to the American public should be in your monopoly and that the people should blindly espouse your cause and bear the consequences?"*<sup>530</sup> The exchange of letters seems to have stopped afterwards.

The establishment of the IAAA raised the curiosity of the Arab legations in Washington. On December 7, 1944, the Egyptian minister Mahmoud Hassan Bey invited an IAAA delegation of four led by Joseph Howar to discuss the new organization. Hassan Bey relayed to the group that Egypt's government was interested in the Palestine issue and therefore offered its help to support the new body. The IAAA delegation however was skeptical because foreign contributions would have necessitated the IAAA to register as a foreign agent for the Egyptian government, something which was bound to limit its impact on American audiences. Hassan Bey accepted the argument and turned the conversation to the Arab League's plans to open its own information office in the US.

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<sup>527</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti, "To Dr. Goitein," April 22, 1945, PHP 5.2.

<sup>528</sup> Shlomo Dov Goitein, "To Philippe Hitti," October 11, 1945, PHP 5.2.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti, "To Dr. Goitein," December 9, 1945, PHP 5.2.

He let them know that Egypt intended to finance it on its own and asked the visitors for an estimate of the required costs. The delegation proposed to put the Egyptian minister in touch with Professor William Yale and Dr. Philip W. Ireland, two NEA advisors who were sympathetic to the Arab cause.<sup>531</sup> At the time, the NEA numbered just 14 officers. Philip Ireland and William Yale, who had left academia to work on the post-war order in a different State Department division, worked with several NEA officers on the policy for Palestine. Given their expert status and the small number of officers, their influence on State Department policy in the Middle East cannot be underestimated.<sup>532</sup>

In a subsequent phone call between an IAAA member, who had participated in the meeting, and Philip Ireland, the official took a liking to the idea of setting up two distinct pro-Arab bodies. However, he advised them “*to have the closest liaison in order to work together effectively, supplying each other with the necessary information.*” He emphasized that “*this liaison of course must be undercover.*”<sup>533</sup> The IAAA member advised Philip Hitti to treat the information with great discretion, as Ireland had intimated to him in their conversation “*(...) that you have an ‘informer’ within your ranks. Whoever he is,*” Ireland added, “*he must be eliminated before you get on with your main work particularly if the other bureau materializes.*”<sup>534</sup> The meaning of the word ‘eliminated’ is not further clarified in the letter. Whatever he meant, Philip Ireland’s behavior was exceptional for several reasons. By counseling the pro-Arab body, Ireland not only undermined US policy, which officially endorsed the abolition of the White Paper, he also advised them to break US law, i.e. the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Moreover, he probably exposed intelligence to the pro-Arab activist by telling him about the mole in the IAAA. This was however not the first time a State Department official had reached out to anti-Zionist activists, as discussed above. The

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<sup>531</sup> “Letter to Philip Hitti and Faris Malouf,” December 8, 1944, PHP 12.6.

<sup>532</sup> Evan M. Wilson, “The Palestine Papers, 1943-1947,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 4 (1973): 36, doi:10.2307/2535630.

<sup>533</sup> “Letter to Philip Hitti and Faris Malouf.”

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

IAAA letter adds evidence to the finding that there was active collusion between State Department officials and anti-Zionist activists.

In September 1945, Hitti appointed the Palestinian Arab Khalil Totah as the new executive director of the IAAA, allowing him to concentrate more on his research and on his projects, which sought to further US interests and involvement in the Arab Middle East. Hitti was in the process of planning a new center for Oriental studies in Princeton, *“which will help our country to play its part more effectively and more intelligently as a great and leading power (...).”*<sup>535</sup> Since November 1945, Hitti and the State Department were also discussing to send him on a trip to the Middle East as part of an exchange program.<sup>536</sup> The State Department eventually offered him a five-month visiting lectureship in Beirut, paying for all expenses, which Hitti accepted.<sup>537</sup> Additional funds were provided by the Lebanese government.<sup>538</sup> The stay afforded Hitti an opportunity to see his old friends from the AUB, who welcomed him graciously. But he also used it to witness the political turmoil in the region. In June 1946, Hitti attended the Arab League conference in Bludan, Syria.<sup>539</sup> In the post-war days, the AUB had to face many challenges. The prices in the Middle East were soaring, putting the missionary institutions in a precarious financial situation. As a result, the Near East College Association was forced to plan for a large fundraising tour in the US and the Arab countries in 1946.<sup>540</sup> The AUB had never defined its mission as strictly academic, as discussed above, but as a tool of a broader enlightening endeavor. The ascendancy of Arab nationalism after the war kindled this sense of mission. Animated by this spirit,

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<sup>535</sup> Philip Khuri Hitti, “To William T. Grant,” November 16, 1944, PHP 5.2.

<sup>536</sup> Robert F. Ogden, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” January 22, 1946, PHP 9.24.

<sup>537</sup> Robert F. Ogden, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” March 26, 1946, PHP 9.24; Robert F. Ogden, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” March 27, 1946, PHP 9.24.

<sup>538</sup> Charles Malik and Legation of Lebanon in Washington, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” April 9, 1946, PHP 9.24.

<sup>539</sup> Bayard Dodge, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” June 12, 1946, PHP 9.10.

<sup>540</sup> Fund for Near East Colleges, “Report Letter No. 1” (Fund for Near East Colleges of the Near East College Association, January 17, 1946), PHP 9.10.

Harry R. Snyder doubted the university “*should remain aloof from the turmoil that arises from the birth throes of a new nation*”, declaring: “*The ivory phase is passed.*”<sup>541</sup> It was therefore no surprise that the AUB was deeply concerned with the American support for Zionism, which seemed to stand in the way of Arab-American cooperation to build up the new Arab nations, as he shared with Hitti: “*Of course it has been humiliating for us to have President Truman push the Zionist program as he has done. It has neutrally aroused a lot of bad feeling. But I do not think that it has done permanent harm, provided he and the other politicians will now keep quiet and put their own country’s interests ahead of the Jews. On the other hand, the Communist propaganda is so aggressive, that if the Anglo-Saxons keep on arousing ill will over Palestine, nobody knows just what may happen.*”<sup>542</sup> The intermingling of the missionary enterprise and anti-Zionist activism in the US would also continue with Hitti’s successor, Khalil Totah, at the head of the IAAA. Hitti on the other hand would continue to fight Zionism in his function as an academic and public intellectual.

Like Hitti, his successor, Khalil Totah, was a scion of the missionary establishment. His mentor had been Edward Kelsey, the principal of the Quaker Friends Boys School in Ramallah and the biblical archeologist Elihu Grant, who probably had met the young Totah during his time in Palestine between 1901 and 1904. Both men promoted Totah’s career morally and financially, allowing him to travel to the US to receive an American education.<sup>543</sup> In pursuance of a policy of nativization or “*devolution*”, which motivated natives to assume leadership roles in the Quaker missionary institutions, Totah assumed the directorship of the Friends Boys School in Ramallah in 1927.<sup>544</sup> Since 1930, he had fought continuously with his superior from the American Friends Board of Missions over financial and administrative issues. At one point, Totah was even

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<sup>541</sup> Harry R. Snyder, “Educational Problems at the American University of Beirut” (AUB, January 30, 1946), PHP 9.10.

<sup>542</sup> Bayard Dodge, “Letter to Philip Hitti,” November 3, 1946, PHP 9.10.

<sup>543</sup> Rutherford, “The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah,” 122.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid., 131.

accused by the superior body of laundering money.<sup>545</sup> Totah presided over the school in an authoritarian manner which was at odds with the democratic Quaker spirit.<sup>546</sup>

Whether these accusations were justified or not, they certainly contributed to embittering Totah towards the missionary enterprise. Like George Antonius, Khalil Totah linked his personal history with the larger Palestine issue. In this vein, he considered his career setbacks to be examples of discrimination towards Arabs and part of their struggle for independence.<sup>547</sup> In a letter to Merle Davis, the secretary of the American Friends Board of Missions, sent in February 1944, he expressed that he felt it was a *“disgrace for my people to be missionarized. This is the land which produced the Bible and I am conscious of belonging to a race which has given mankind its great monotheistic faiths.”*<sup>548</sup> This statement is not only surprising for its antagonistic tone towards the missionary enterprise, of which Totah had been a part all his life, but also its appropriation of Jewish and Christian history by Arab nationalism. In the same letter, Totah declared his goal of an Arab Quaker movement, a goal he felt the Americans were sabotaging: they have *“been attempting to minimize, discredit and kill a yearning, a longing, a desire for a self-respecting rejuvenation of Arab Quakerism in Palestine (...). They are practicing the maxim of Roman imperialism of ‘divide and rule’. They may be belittling the movement to you declaring that it will prove to be of short duration.”*<sup>549</sup> In his response, Merle Davis criticized Totah’s nationalistic tone and faulted his character, alleging that he had a *“double personality. At times, when you become emotionally stirred, (...) you lose your sense of proportion, even bordering on*

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<sup>545</sup> Ibid., 109–18.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., 127–28, 141.

<sup>548</sup> Khalil Totah, “Letter to Merle Davis,” February 13, 1944; cited via Rutherford, “The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah,” 104.

<sup>549</sup> Totah, “Letter to Merle Davis”; cited via Rutherford, “The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah,” 139.

*the violent.*<sup>550</sup> Totah's difficult character also impacted his later career, as well will see later in this chapter. Given the acrimonious tone of this exchange and his high-handed management style, it was no surprise when Totah was eventually forced to resign in October 1944. When news of Totah's forthcoming dismissal became known in Palestine, he received support from Arab nationalist circles. Former Istiklal leader Awni Abd al-Hadi, the father of one of his students, and the entrepreneur Wadie A. Said, the father of Edward Said, offered him jobs.<sup>551</sup>

However, Totah decided to move his family to the US, the native country of his wife, where he arrived in November 1944, finding work as an interim minister in a church in Massachusetts. In January 1945, he wrote to Philip Hitti, whom he knew from before, to apply for a job at the IAAA and, in September 1945, Hitti eventually appointed Totah as the executive director of the IAAA, replacing himself in that position.<sup>552</sup> Totah was well-versed in US and Arab culture, knowledge which seemingly predisposed him for this position. Moreover, he had spoken on behalf of the Arab Cause in the past, testifying in 1937 in front of the Peel Commission to discuss the education of the Arabs in Palestine and to demand higher investments from the mandate government.<sup>553</sup> Merle Davis, who was otherwise critical of his management style, had recommended him for such a position in a letter in December 1944: "*A number of people have expressed the hope that a way would open for you to be the voice of the Arab people*

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<sup>550</sup> cited via Merle Davis, "Letter to Khalil Totah," March 15, 1944; Rutherford, "The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah," 143.

<sup>551</sup> Rutherford, "The Education of Dr. Khalil Totah," 146–49.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid., 154; Joy Totah Hilden, *A Passion for Learning: The Life Journey of Khalil Totah, a Palestinian Quaker Educator and Activist* (Xlibris, 2016), ll. 3407–3462.

<sup>553</sup> Wireless To The New York Times, "ARABS HEARD, ENDING INQUIRY IN PALESTINE; Educational and Immigration Policies Assailed--Jewish Home Termed a Peril," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1937, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9E06E1DD143AE23ABC4152DFB766838C629EDE&legacy=true>.



*in this country (...) I do not know of anyone that is better fitted to do that than you are.*"<sup>554</sup> However, it soon became clear that this was not entirely the case.

The IAAA was a body which sought both to address a larger audience through public diplomacy and to cultivate links with the foreign policy circles in Washington. The festive dinners the IAAA's hosted were attended by the State Department Arabists, including Loy Henderson, and the representatives of the Arab legations. This was a mutual interest. The State Department also solicited the IAAA's opinion on issues concerning Palestine. Exchanges between the State Department and the IAAA were certainly facilitated by the fact that the IAAA board of advisers consisted of many eminent personalities of the same Protestant missionary and Arabist circles which also staffed the NEA. Among those were Virginia Gildersleeve, William Hocking, former member of the King-Crane commission Albert Lybyer, Kermit Roosevelt, oil entrepreneur Max Thornburg, and Glora Wysner, to name but a few.<sup>555</sup>

After Totah joined the IAAA in September 1945, he displayed impressive activity on its behalf. On October 5, 1945, the IAAA joined the Arab Office and the Arab legations in protesting Truman's endorsement of settling 100'000 Jewish refugees in Palestine, with Totah calling the refugee issue a Zionist "*subterfuge for its political ends*."<sup>556</sup> The Institute scored a success when it was invited to give testimony to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in January 1946, the only pro-Arab US organization to do so. The Washington hearings started on January 7, 1946 and took 7 days. On days 5 and 6, the committee listened to testimonies opposed to Zionism by Jewish, Protestant and Arab-American representatives. Lessing Rosenwald of the AJC expressed the standard Reform Jewish anti-Zionist argument, namely that Zionism exposed the Jews to the accusation of dual allegiance. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, who was also present,

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<sup>554</sup> Hilden, *A Passion for Learning*, 3465.

<sup>555</sup> Totah, "My Four and a Half Years in New York," I. 6392; 3700 Hilden, *A Passion for Learning*.

<sup>556</sup> "ARABS DECRY ZIONISM; Group Here Tells Truman Jewish Problem Has Another Solution," *The New York Times*, October 7, 1945, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9E06EEDF163FE73ABC4F53DFB667838E659EDE&legacy=true>.

interrupted him, citing Justice Brandeis: *“There is no inconsistency between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry.”*<sup>557</sup> Next to speak was Leland S. Albright of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, representing the anti-Zionist missionary view. In his opinion, the new Jewish state would be of an expansionist character, seeking more and more *“Lebensraum”*. By using the loaded German term ‘Lebensraum’, Albright likened the Zionist project to that of the National-Socialists.<sup>558</sup>

The next day, Professor Philipp Hitti testified. At the time, his speech was widely credited with having been the most erudite and efficient. In retrospect, the factual basis of his arguments seems surprisingly spurious. At first, Hitti dissected what he believed to be the Zionist core arguments. To counter the biblical claim of the Jews to the Land of Israel, he cited the short span of time the Jews had reigned over the country and their origin as invaders. The Arabs on the other hand were continuously inhabiting the country, he claimed: *“You came from outside and occupied a land which was already occupied (...) Amorites and Canaanites and by other Semites from whom we are descended.”*<sup>559</sup> Moreover, he questioned the importance of Jerusalem for Judaism by citing its holy status in Islam and Christianity. This was nonsensical, as it ignored that Jerusalem’s special importance in both of the other monotheistic religions stemmed from the presence of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Hitti’s next point against Zionism was even more surprising and, possibly, self-defeating: *“Sir, there is no such thing as Palestine in history, absolutely not,”* he insisted. Rather, he maintained, Palestine was merely a geographic reference for a patch of land with no natural borders located in a *“solid Arab-speaking block- 50’000’000 people.”*<sup>560</sup> His claim of Palestine’s non-existence was meant to strengthen calls for Arab unity. Hitti also took a hard line in the refugee issue. In Hitti’s vision, the Jewish community would receive some unspecified community rights in Palestine, but its numbers would be frozen and the admittance of refugees – one of the main demands of the Jewish leadership – rejected. Hitti argued

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<sup>557</sup> Podet, *The Success and Failure of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945-1946*, 167.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid., 168–69.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

that even peaceful refugees were a means for the Zionists to achieve domination of the country. *"In the mind of the Arab, every Zionist coming in is a potential warrior,"* he stated unequivocally.<sup>561</sup> After Hitti followed Dr. John G. Hazam, Khalil Totah and Wilbert H. Smith, who were all also representing the IAAA. Hazam was a history professor at the City College in New York. Wilbert Smith was of missionary background, being an official of the Young Men's Christian Association. He had served as the organization's secretary for Egypt and Palestine in the 1930s and was instrumental in setting up numerous branches.<sup>562</sup> Hazam's main arguments were that the Balfour Declaration underestimated the Arabs' political maturity as they had already gathered democratic experience in the Ottoman parliament, and that the Jewish problem should not be solved at the expense of the Arabs, who had no guilt in it. He further rejected that the Arabs had economically profited from Zionism. Khalil Totah followed a similar line, maintaining that the Arabs had not profited from Zionist development and aid. All the Jews could hope for was *"the traditional hospitality of the Arab majority"*.<sup>563</sup> Lastly, Wilbert Smith saw the conflict primarily as an issue of national self-determination, which was denied to the Arabs. Charles T. Bridgeman, who had served as the American Episcopal Church's representative in Palestine from 1924 to 1944, was the last to speak against Zionism.<sup>564</sup>

The Institute had at their disposal an extensive mailing list, including thousands of recipients both in the US and abroad. Most missives, about two thousand, reached Arab and non-Arab American sympathizers. The list also included hundreds of addresses from the press, politicians, public officials, and Arab governments, among others. Interestingly, 500 communications were addressed to the clergy, underlining

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<sup>561</sup> Ibid., 170–74.

<sup>562</sup> Lara Friedman-Shedlov, "History of YMCA Work in Palestine and Israel," *Records of YMCA International Work in Palestine and Israel*, 2010, <http://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/7/resources/929>.

<sup>563</sup> Podet, *The Success and Failure of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945-1946*, 178.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., 175–83.

the important role Christians played in anti-Zionist activism.<sup>565</sup> Publications such as 'Arab Progress in Palestine', which was published in 1946, emphasized the modernity among the Arab-Palestinian population. The tone of the brochure was distinctively modernist and pro-Western, praising the West's "*dynamic spirit*".<sup>566</sup> This translated into a positive assessment of the history of Western involvement in the Middle East, mentioning explicitly its missionaries, schools, hospitals and printing presses, which the brochure contrasted with the detrimental influence of the Turks. The creation of insurances was cited as evidence that "*enlightened Arabs*" were abandoning fatalistic religion.<sup>567</sup> Describing the Palestinians' adaptations of modern techniques and the quick development of industry, commerce and education, the outlook towards the future seemed optimistic. The brochure dedicated a section to the social progress of Arab women, responding to an obvious area of concern among Westerners.<sup>568</sup>

Khalil Totah was a regular guest on radio shows and at public events during the three years from 1946 until 1948. The *Bulletin*, the monthly publication of the Institute, reported these activities under the cheerful title 'The Tide is Turning' in its September 1946 issue. In August and September 1946 alone, Totah engaged in a public debate with James Heller of the Zionist Organization of America, as well as holding talks in front of large audiences at the Chautauqua organization, the Rotary Club and the military base in Fort Dix. Representatives of the Arab Office and the Institute as well as sympathizers sent letters to the editors of the *New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune*.<sup>569</sup> On November 16, 1946, Totah debated against Jewish Agency representative to the US, Nahum Goldmann, at the Foreign Policy Association luncheon meeting on 'The Problem of Palestine' held at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, which was attended by 700 listeners. Some in the audience booed when Totah

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<sup>565</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 265.

<sup>566</sup> Khalil Totah, "Arab Progress in Palestine" (New York: The Institute of Arab American Affairs, 1946), 3.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>569</sup> "The Tide Is Turning," *Bulletin of the Insitute of Arab American Affairs*, September 15, 1946.

stated provocatively that *"the great contribution of Zionism to the Holy Land has been bloodshed since Zionism began,"* forecasting menacingly that the Yishuv risked annihilation if the Zionists' demands were not moderated.<sup>570</sup> However, this negative reception was not the rule and IAAA speakers were welcome to speak at many venues, churches, and colleges etc. After one successful event held by the Foreign Policy Association, the IAAA felt compelled to report the positive reception to the State Department.<sup>571</sup>

Totalah also sought to work with the anti-Zionist Jews of the ACJ and was in touch with Alfred Lilienthal and Elmer Berger, regularly appearing on stage with the latter. The IAAA praised his book, *'The Jewish Dilemma'*, in its publications.<sup>572</sup> However, the admiration seems not have been mutual. Although obviously sympathetic to Totalah's opinions, Berger described Totalah as an agreeable, but unstable and easily provoked character. Interestingly, his words mirror those of Totalah's former Quaker friends: *"He was a very nice man - a Quaker as I recall. We would meet occasionally at some public forum or debate. Totalah's formal presentations always seemed to me reasonable and predicated upon political equities and justice. But the Zionist clagues which regularly came to such sessions (and usually sat in a bloc) had Totalah's number. During question or discussion periods they would ask loaded questions or bait him with derisive comments about "Arabs." And the old boy would obligingly just go through the ceiling. He would lose control of his intellectual resources and become an almost maniacal, emotional hunted animal, screaming and striking back with anything that came to his*

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<sup>570</sup> "Arab Booed When He States Zionism Brought Only Bloodshed to Palestine," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 17, 1946, <http://www.jta.org/1946/11/18/archive/arab-booed-when-he-states-zionism-brought-only-bloodshed-to-palestine>; "Events Today," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1946, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D05E2D8143FE73ABC4E52DFB767838D659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>571</sup> Totalah, "My Four and a Half Years in New York," 6506–91.

<sup>572</sup> Institute of Arab American Affairs, "Monthly Progress Report," November 1945; Hilden, *A Passion for Learning*, II. 3700–3745.

*mind or to his saddened and despairing heart. I tried, several times, to advise him to keep control. I told him he was performing exactly as the Zionist errand boys wanted him to do. He might feel better for letting off steam, but the majority of Americans in any audience who had come with the serious intention of learning were being cheated, which was exactly what the Zionists wanted to do to them. And although I - or some other American who might be on the platform - could argue American interests and I, more particularly, could demonstrate the differences between Zionism and Judaism, it was Totah's responsibility to state the Arab position and to do it responsibly and with credibility.*<sup>573</sup>

The IAAA press output also sought to co-opt Jewish anti-Zionism. A collection of essays by prominent anti-Zionist Jews was published in 1947, featuring contributions by Arthur Sulzberger, Morris Raphael Cohen, Henry Morgenthau Sr., Rabbi Irving F. Reichert, Israel M. Rabinovitch from McGill University and Benjamin Freedman. All the contributors had established pedigrees of anti-Zionist activism. Morris Cohen, a distinguished philosopher who had fought Zionism for almost three decades, considered Zionism a form of romantic nationalism antithetical to the values of America.<sup>574</sup> Arthur Sulzberger, the editor of the *New York Times*, was a supporter of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism. But Benjamin Freedman was undeniably the most controversial figure among the contributors. Freedman, who was then a well-known Jewish anti-Zionist activist, became notorious for his Holocaust denial in the 1950s. Freedman's article was titled 'There is no Jewish Race' and argued that most Jews were descended from converts and therefore did not form a Jewish nation. Making use of the Khazar Myth, he claimed that Eastern European Jewry was descended from the Khazars, a Turkish Tribe that had formed a kingdom in the Caucasus region in the Middle Ages. This implied that, as converts to Judaism, the contemporary Jews had no national rights to the Land of Israel.<sup>575</sup> Freedman

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<sup>573</sup> Berger, "Memoirs of an Anti-Zionist Jew," 24.

<sup>574</sup> Susanne Klingenstein, *Jews in the American Academy, 1900-1940: The Dynamics of Intellectual Assimilation* (Syracuse University Press, 1998), 50–52.

<sup>575</sup> Institute of Arab American Affairs, "Papers on Palestine III - A Collection of Articles by Distinguished Jews Who Oppose Political Zionism" (New York: The

popularized the Khazar Theory. He relayed this theory to the Arab delegates at the UN. The Syrian representative Faris al-Khoury later argued in the General Assembly that the Jews had no right to a state because the majority of them were not real Jews.<sup>576</sup>

In the letter section of the *New York Times*, Khalil Totah regularly fought supporters of the establishment of a Jewish state. In response to a letter by James G. McDonald in favor of the UN Special Committee on Palestine's (UNSCOP) partition plan, Totah contradicted McDonald, arguing that it dispossessed the Palestinian Arabs and would lead to war, an expansionist Jewish state and, possibly, a US military intervention. He concluded that the US was being led into a dangerous scheme as the "(...) *Zionists, it would seem, would not mind having the United States going to any limit in antagonizing the Arab world as long as their whim for a Jewish state is satisfied.*"<sup>577</sup> McDonald interpreted the statement as a threat of war, despite the Arab states' promise to refrain from using violence to settle the Palestine conflict.<sup>578</sup> However, Totah stuck to his point. He believed that the Americans were underestimating the Arabs' will to go to war over partition. This was dangerous and wrong, as it was "*no longer a matter of patriotism to defend Palestine but the religious duty of every Arab and every Moslem.*" Correctly, he also noted that this was not only the sentiment of "*sinister*" leaders like the Mufti, but

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Institute of Arab American Affairs, 1947), 28–31; David B. MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation* (Routledge, 2007), 56.

<sup>576</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 61.

<sup>577</sup> Khalil Totah Affairs Executive Director, Institute Of Arab American, "Against Palestine Plan; Military Intervention in Holy Land Feared in Backing Partition," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1947, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D07E6D9153AE233A25753C1A96F9C946693D6CF&legacy=true>.

<sup>578</sup> James G. McDonald, "Arab Threats of War; Inconsistency of Statements by U.N. Members Pointed Out," *The New York Times*, September 15, 1947, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9400E1DB133CE13BBC4D52DFBF66838C659EDE&legacy=true>.

a far broader attitude.<sup>579</sup> Another discussant was Karl Baehr, the executive secretary of the American Christian Palestine Committee. After the outbreak of war in Palestine, Totah continued to speak out against the alleged “*clever manipulations*” of Zionism and did not recognize Israel. Baehr questioned the sincerity of Totah’s claim to stand for a solution based on “*justice and righteousness*”, which he had made in the *New York Times*.<sup>580</sup> Rejection of partition would have endangered the Yishuv and have meant the “*destruction of a civilization which had been built upon the foundation of international law (...)*”.<sup>581</sup> Moreover, Baehr felt that his own support for Israel had been vindicated by the persecutions against Jews in Muslim Arab states: “*Recent murders and executions of Jews in Egypt, Iraq and other lands make one realize how ‘just and righteous’ an all-Arab Palestine would be in its treatment of a Jewish minority and underscore the validity of the U. N. decision to create a viable Jewish state.*”<sup>582</sup>

Despite the immense amount of his activities, Totah proved an unskillful advocate of the Arab cause, both for his temperament and his convictions. The American Zionists identified the Arab spokesmen in the US – largely correctly – as followers of the discredited Mufti. To them, the fight against the anti-Zionists appeared like a continuation of the fight against National Socialism. Even when given opportunity to distance himself from the Mufti, Khalil Totah instead defended him, as it happened

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<sup>579</sup> Khalil Totah, “Arab Views on Palestine; Tendency to Underrate Opposition of Arabs Viewed as Folly,” *The New York Times*, December 23, 1947, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D03E1D9103CE13BBC4B51DFB467838C659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>580</sup> Khalil Totah, “The Palestine Problem; Only Permanent Solution Is One Based on Righteousness, It Is Said,” *The New York Times*, October 1, 1948, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9904E4D61F3CE03ABC4953DFB6678383659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>581</sup> Rev Karl Baehr, “Solution for Palestine; Maximum Justice for Both Peoples Seen Implicit in Just Solution,” *The New York Times*, October 7, 1948, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D00E7DC1E3BE33BBC4F53DFB6678383659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.



during a townhall meeting in 1946.<sup>583</sup> His defense of the Mufti weakened the public diplomacy effort and only strengthened the argument of the American Zionists that the Arab enemies of Zionism were anti-Semites and Nazi collaborators.<sup>584</sup>

The Arab propagandists operating in Western countries generally believed that they were fighting an uphill battle against Zionism. They also showed a certain obsession with the idea of Jewish power and money. In this vein, their impression of the political atmosphere in the US was one of overbearing Zionist and Jewish influence. Thus, the head of the Arab Offices, Musa Alami, was convinced that the Arabs were the underdogs in the propaganda battle against their Zionist adversaries: *"We were just visitors sitting in an hotel, with no pressure groups at our disposal, no money to buy space in the press; but by dint of perseverance, and all the objectivity we could muster, we gradually won the confidence of the press, of some Members of Parliament and Congressmen, and above all of the officials of the Foreign Office and State Department who dealt with the Middle East, because they heard from us viewpoints which they received from no other source. We defended Arab interests all over the world, for example those in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and had sections of our Offices run at our expense by people from those countries: Habib Bourguiba, later President of Tunisia, was one of our colleagues in Washington."*<sup>585</sup> Like his colleagues in the Arab Office, Totah was equally convinced that the fight against the Zionist lobby in the US was a fight against Goliath, with the Arabs being David. After the US recognition of Israel, Stephen Penrose criticized the decision in a letter to the *New York Times*. Totah seconded the criticism in another letter to the same newspaper, contending that *"On the Zionist side in New York there are limitless funds for flooding the countryside with a partisan one-sided propaganda. When the sign is given by the high command, an avalanche of editorials, news stories, politicians' speeches, telegrams, mass meetings and parades are let loose upon the public. Commentators fill the air waves with favorable comment on the Zionist side. As for the Arabs, when they try to state their*

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<sup>583</sup> Dorothy Waring, "Report on Investigation of Ben Freedman" August 21, 1946, ANLP 275.13.

<sup>584</sup> Berman, *Nazism, the Jews, and American Zionism, 1933-1948*, 160–63.

<sup>585</sup> Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country*, 140.

side of the story they receive nothing but abuse. Rightly does Mr. Penrose state 'there has been no criticism yet directed at the Zionists.'<sup>586</sup> Of course, Totah must have been aware of the fact that there was plenty of criticism of Zionism in the US, since he was one of its most prominent articulators. However, the claim that the means of the pro-Zionists were superior beyond measure to those of the pro-Arabs was one of the most powerful figures of speech the anti-Zionists had at their disposal, in no small part because it seemed to confirm widespread beliefs about Jewish power. The association of Jews with money and power also constantly occurs in Totah's autobiographical account of his years working for the IAAA. Speaking about an anti-Zionist advertisement in the *New York Times* by the IAAA for instance, he laments that "Even that half-page was paid for by a Jew," meaning his collaborator, Benjamin Freedman.<sup>587</sup> Totah's views were shaped by anti-Semitic imagery.

The financial situation of the IAAA meanwhile looked increasingly bleak. In 1946-47, the Institute had a yearly budget of roughly 36'000 dollars.<sup>588</sup> In May 1948, an income of 28'000 still outweighed expenses of 25'000 with 15'000 savings. However, the establishment of Israel seems to have dealt the Institute a deadly blow, from which it never recovered.<sup>589</sup> In December 1949, Hocking and Gildersleeve sent a letter to the Institutes' members to call attention to its dismal financial situation and to ask for donations. Short of funding, the Institute even tried to solicit money from Aramco, but the oil giant failed to deliver – for reasons of fear, Khalil Totah believed, as he expressed in a letter to William Hocking. In vain, Hocking tried to convince Totah that the Institute's mission to communicate to the US public and to the Arab world was now more urgent than ever. In January 1950, the Executive Committee decided to disband

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<sup>586</sup> Khalil Tota H Inc executive Director, Institute of Arab American Affairs, "Arab Stand on Recognition; Concerted Effort to Prevent Hearing of Arab Case Is Charged," *The New York Times*, May 28, 1948, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=940CE4DC1230E23ABC4051DFB3668383659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>587</sup> Totah, "My Four and a Half Years in New York," 6454.

<sup>588</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 271.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 286.

the Institute.<sup>590</sup> However, this would not be the end of pro-Arab activism in the US. Leaders of the Institute like Virginia Gildersleeve, Georges Barakat and Kermit Roosevelt had already established new organizations, which would carry on. Khalil Totah would die on February 24, 1955 in Whittier in California.<sup>591</sup>

#### 4.3 Benjamin Freedman and the League for Peace with Justice in Palestine

According to an NSANL informer who entertained friendly relations with Benjamin Freedman, Freedman had first considered taking action against Zionism in early 1946. After donating money to the anti-Zionist Council for Judaism, he had lunch with its co-leader, Lessing Rosenwald. Freedman made the offer to finance a public ad campaign against Zionism, but Rosenwald rejected it. He explained to Freedman that although the Council's secular and liberal base objected to Zionism, this did not mean that it endorsed Arab demands. Instead, Rosenwald advised Freedman to get in touch with the Institute of Arab American Affairs, which he did. Freedman had a meeting with Khalil Totah, Habib Katibah and Ismail Khalidi. Khalil Totah however was suspicious and at first rejected Freedman's offer to finance the campaign, fearing that Freedman was a Zionist spy. At last however, Habib Katibah agreed to support the creation of a new anti-Zionist body, the League for Peace with Justice in Palestine.<sup>592</sup> Between May and August 1946, the League for Peace with Justice in Palestine bought five full-page advertisements in the *Herald Tribune*, the latest of which featured quotations from mainly Jewish personalities against Zionism. The campaign was greeted by the Institute of Arab American Affairs as a sign that public opinion was tilting in a pro-Arab direction.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Ibid., 289–91.

<sup>591</sup> Special To The New York Times, "DR. KHALIL A. TOTAH," *The New York Times*, February 26, 1955, <http://www.nytimes.com/1955/02/26/archives/dr-khalil-a-totah.html>.

<sup>592</sup> Dorothy Waring, "Report on Investigation of the Arab Office and Ben Freedman" July 26, 1946, ANLP 275.13.

<sup>593</sup> "The Tide Is Turning."

From its configuration, it can be assumed that the League was initially planned as an organization uniting Arab, Jewish and Christian anti-Zionists. Habib Katibah signed the League's newsletters as "*representing cooperating persons of Arab ancestry*", while Freedman claimed to represent members of the Jewish faith. A certain R.M. Schoendorf, who was later revealed to be Freedman's wife, signed as the representative for Christians. The propaganda tone was shrill. A newsletter from June 1946 warned that "*World War III may burst upon the world if an attempt is made to transplant into Palestine, against the wishes of the Arab, 100,000 displaced European Jews (...)*".<sup>594</sup> Despite his own Jewishness, Freedman personally harbored anti-Jewish prejudice. Thus, he was proud of the modest clothes of his wife, "*who did not have to advertise that she is married to a Jew*" and called on his "*wealthy Jewish friends*" to learn from "*simplicity in which the wealthiest Christians in America are living*".<sup>595</sup> During the course of 1946, Benjamin Freedman became increasingly obsessed with the idea that the modern Jews bore no kinship with the Jews of antiquity. The aim was obvious: Without a Jewish people, there was no foundation for Zionism. His research would "*prove that the Jews are not a people and that Judaism is little else than a faith,*" Freedman confided in a private conversation.<sup>596</sup>

Freedman even antagonized the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee. When the American Jewish Committee declared publicly that the League was representing no one but Benjamin Freedman himself, he filed a lawsuit against them with a claim for damages for the enormous sum of \$5'000'000. A statement by the American Jewish Committee expressed confidence in the lawsuit, seeing it as "*an opportunity to demonstrate the nature and character of the 'League for Peace and Justice in Palestine' and Mr. Freedman's role in it.*"<sup>597</sup> The trial seems not to have taken place.

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<sup>594</sup> League for Peace and Justice in Palestine, Habib I. Katibah, and Ben H. Freedman, "Newsletter," June 21, 1946, ANLP 286.8.

<sup>595</sup> Dorothy Waring, "Report on Investigation of Ben Freedman," August 21, 1946.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> "READY TO MEET SUIT, JEWISH GROUP SAYS," *The New York Times*, July 8, 1946,

Freedman also threatened NSANL chairman, James H. Sheldon, with a lawsuit, as he felt unfairly treated by the organization. He told an NSANL informer that he was willing to do anything possible to fight anti-Semitism.<sup>598</sup> On August 29, 1946, his lawyer, Hallam Richardson, filed a complaint against Sheldon for violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which obliged agents of foreign governments to disclose their affiliation, and further demanded damages of one million dollars for harming Freedman's reputation. The bill of indictment accused Sheldon himself of being anti-Semitic, stating that he was working *"to further the interest of foreign political parties and/or pro-Zionist (...) terrorist organizations, committees and agencies whose totalitarian policies and activities are un-American, anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian (...)."*<sup>599</sup> Again, for whatever reason, no trial seems to have followed. This would change two years later.

In these years, Freedman did not yet openly associate with the American extreme right. Still, Freedman was often accused of frequenting extremist and anti-Semitic circles. According to an NSANL investigator, Freedman was in touch with a young woman by the surname of Maher, who had worked as the secretary for the anti-Semitic activist, Eugene R. Flitcraft.<sup>600</sup> Flitcraft had founded the Gentile Cooperative Association in 1944, an organization that promised *"to halt the growing Jewish power"* and *"to help businessmen who might otherwise have to sell out to Jewish interests."*<sup>601</sup> She was

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<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9B0DEEDB1538E53ABC4053DFB166838D659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>598</sup> Dorothy Waring, "Report on Investigation of Ben Freedman" August 29, 1946, ANLP 275.14.

<sup>599</sup> Hallam M. Richardson, "Complaint by Hallam M. Richardson against James H. Sheldon" August 29, 1946, ANLP 276.4.

<sup>600</sup> "g," "Report on E. C. Riegel to Dorothy Waring" August 1, 1946, ANLP 275.13.

<sup>601</sup> "New Organization Formed in Chicago 'to Halt Jewish Power' in America," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, February 8, 1944, <http://www.jta.org/1944/02/09/archive/new-organization-formed-in-chicago-to-halt-jewish-power-in-america>.

further associated with Gerald L.K. Smith and his American First Party.<sup>602</sup> In July 1947, the NSANL presented a memorandum to the Congress in which the pro-Arab lobby was accused of collusion with the far-right and the Mufti faction.<sup>603</sup> The accusations were repeated in a brochure by the NSANL in November 1947 for the UN.<sup>604</sup>

The brochure claimed that Hallam Richardson, the League's attorney, had "*long been known in the halls of the pro-Fascist propaganda*".<sup>605</sup> In response, Richardson had filed a libel complaint against Henry Atkinson, then chairman of the NSANL board. The trial took place in New York in May 1948. The defense focused on the League for Peace and Justice in Palestine and Freedman's activities. By giving proof of their anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist character, the defense sought to validate the statement. Freedman's testimonies made over a three-day cross-examination invariably incriminated the League. Freedman claimed to have spent more than \$100'000 in his anti-Zionist campaign. The NSANL defense attorney confronted him with a statement he had written in a newsletter, in which he called on the US population to stop being the "*tool of a small but ruthless and unscrupulous minority of a minority people*".<sup>606</sup> Questioned

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<sup>602</sup> "g," "Report on E. C. Riegel to Dorothy Waring."

<sup>603</sup> Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, "Memorandum 'Arab Agents Use Nazi Fellow-Travelers to Defeat America's Palestine Policy,'" *Congressional Record*, July 26, 1947, ANLP 286.11.

<sup>604</sup> Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, *Pan-Arab Propaganda - Its pro-Fascist and pro-Nazi Aspects in America* (New York, 1947).

<sup>605</sup> "ANTI-NAZI LEADER CLEARED OF LIBEL; Magistrate Rejects Charges of H. M. Richardson Against the Rev. Dr. H. A. Atkinson," *The New York Times*, May 27, 1948,  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9402E2DB143BE33BBC4F51DFB3668383659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>606</sup> "ANTI-ZIONIST LISTS POLICY 'DICTATORS'; Lehman, Baruch and Warburg Named as Among Those Who Influence U.S. on Palestine," *The New York Times*, May 5, 1948,  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9E06E5DF133BE33BBC4D53DFB3668383659EDE&legacy=true>.

by the defense as to whom he meant by this statement, he named several leading Jewish businessmen and politicians and IBM CEO Thomas J. Watson, whom Freedman may have believed to be Jewish as well.<sup>607</sup>

The defense sought to demonstrate that the League was coordinating its activities with Arab anti-Zionists at home and abroad. It presented the court with a telegram Freedman had sent to a certain Ahmad Hussain in Cairo, in which Freedman asked Hussain *“to extend his eminence wishes for continued (...) struggle (on) behalf of justice (for) his people (by) giving here fullest cooperation (...).”*<sup>608</sup> In an article in an Egyptian newspaper, the same Ahmad Hussain had called Freedman a holy warrior for the Arab cause.<sup>609</sup> The defense saw the telegram as evidence that Freedman was in direct contact with the Mufti, a charge he denied.<sup>610</sup> Freedman’s correspondence further hinted at the possibility that he was also involved in efforts to break the arms embargo for Palestine. In autumn 1947, a certain A.A. Jalil from the Three Oceans Trading Company in Bombay asked Freedman for the provision of 500’000 rifles and the setting up of arms factories *“for defence purposes”*.<sup>611</sup> Possibly, the arms were meant for the upcoming war against the newly established Jewish state. Responding to the request in a telegram, Freedman spoke cryptically of the difficult market conditions for *“coal”, “jute”* and *“sugar”*, probably codewords for arms. In clearer language however, Freedman claimed in the same telegram to *“have negotiated immediate establishment Pakistan Thompson submachine gun factories*

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<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> Ben H. Freedman, “Telegram to Ahmad Hussein,” September 7, 1947, ANLP 286.8; “Mufti Mentioned at Libel Hearing,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1948, ANLP 286.12.

<sup>609</sup> “ANTI-ZIONIST LISTS POLICY ‘DICTATORS’; Lehman, Baruch and Warburg Named as Among Those Who Influence U.S. on Palestine.”

<sup>610</sup> “Mufti Mentioned at Libel Hearing.”

<sup>611</sup> A.A. Jalil, “Letter to Ben Freedman,” September 19, 1947, ANLP 286.8.

*equipment.*<sup>612</sup> Freedman denied having been involved in the arms trade but refused to elaborate on the telegram's unequivocal message. NSANL leader James H. Sheldon thereupon informed the UN delegate of India, from where the Three Oceans Company was operating, on the situation.<sup>613</sup> Still, considering Freedman's colorful personality, it is not possible to take the truthfulness of the telegram for granted. It may be just as likely that Freedman was falling victim to his own pretentious claims.

Phone records also showed that Freedman was in regular contact with the Saudi Arabian Ministry and the Egyptian Embassy in Washington.<sup>614</sup> Furthermore, the defense demonstrated that Freedman had been involved in drafting a memorandum together with Habib Katibah, which an Arab delegation then presented to Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson on May 10, 1946.<sup>615</sup> Thus, the evidence was conclusive that the League was connected to Arab anti-Zionist activists, many of them former or current sympathizers of the Mufti, and that Freedman harbored anti-Semitic feelings. The verdict was pronounced on May 26, 1948, clearing the NSANL of any wrongdoing. The wording could hardly have been harsher. The judge declared that the accusations against Richardson were *"prompted by a sincere desire to champion human rights, to combat racial and religious discrimination and prejudice (...)."* Moreover, *"when he starts to associate with a crack-pot like Freedman, who is just an international meddler, he becomes his companion and collaborator."*<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Ben H. Freedman, "Telegram to Triocean Company," October 17, 1947, ANLP 286.8.

<sup>613</sup> "Mufti Mentioned at Libel Hearing."

<sup>614</sup> "ANTI-ZIONIST LISTS POLICY 'DICTATORS'; Lehman, Baruch and Warburg Named as Among Those Who Influence U.S. on Palestine."

<sup>615</sup> "WITNESS ADMITS AIDING ARAB CAUSE; Freedman, Testifying in Libel Case, Cooperated on Note to State Department," *The New York Times*, May 7, 1948, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9804E0DF1630E03BBC4F53DFB3668383659EDE&legacy=true>.

<sup>616</sup> "ANTI-NAZI LEADER CLEARED OF LIBEL; Magistrate Rejects Charges of H. M. Richardson Against the Rev. Dr. H. A. Atkinson."



The trial had several consequences. It generally weakened the position of the anti-Zionists, both in the civil society and in the government. In the aftermath of the trial, the Department of Justice contemplated investigating the network around Freedman for colluding with a foreign government in violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act.<sup>617</sup> The irony was that Freedman had himself accused the NSANL of violating this law in August 1946, as mentioned above. During the libel trial, it was also revealed that Ben Freedman had repeatedly called Loy Henderson, the unpopular NEA chief. It was however unclear whether Henderson accepted these calls. Still, on May 3, 1948, New York congressman, Arthur G. Klein, called for Henderson's resignation in a telegram to President Truman and Secretary of State George Marshall, writing: "*This is but the last in a long series of disclosures of Henderson's bias in favor of the member States of the Moslem bloc, the murderous Mufti of Jerusalem Amin El Husseini, and the Arabian American Oil Company (...), demonstrating his unfitness to administer American policy in accordance with his instructions.*"<sup>618</sup> The trial left Freedman discredited and he was no longer involved in the different anti-Zionist endeavors which continued to operate after the establishment of Israel on May 14, 1948. In the month of Israel's declaration of independence, Freedman finally reported that he was in the process of converting to Catholicism.<sup>619</sup> Henceforth, Ben Freedman became an iconic figure of the extreme right in the US.<sup>620</sup>

#### 4.4 The Arab League's Campaign against Zionism and the Arab Offices

In December 1944, the Arab League worked out a preliminary plan for a comprehensive propaganda campaign regarding the Palestine issue. A substantial

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<sup>617</sup> Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, "Memo on Opinion of Judge Hyman Bushel" May 26, 1948, ANLP 286.12; Julius L. Goldstein, "Letter to Judge Hyman Bushel," July 13, 1948, ANLP 286.9.

<sup>618</sup> Arthur G. Klein, "Telegram to President Truman, Secretary Marshall and General Hildering," May 3, 1948, ANLP 286.12; "Mufti Mentioned at Libel Hearing."

<sup>619</sup> "WITNESS ADMITS AIDING ARAB CAUSE; Freedman, Testifying in Libel Case, Cooperated on Note to State Department."

<sup>620</sup> MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide*.

part of the document was dedicated to the US, which the Arabs considered to be the major arena of the future struggle over public opinion. The draft stated that previous propaganda efforts in the US had failed. American sympathizers had advised the Arab League to recruit people both knowledgeable on the issue of Palestine and familiar with American culture. While Arab-Americans could be of help in these efforts, the bulk of the work would fall on the Office. Unlike in Britain, where the Arab Office preferred backdoor lobbying, the draft recognized the need to engage in a public relations campaign to counter the Zionists, a campaign which would employ all modern means of communication, including cinema and radio.<sup>621</sup> An undated preliminary concept, which was probably drafted in 1945, recommended that the Office should not associate with anti-Jewish and anti-British elements. The Arab Office would communicate the modern aspects and general issues of the Arab region. Its main aim however was to counter the Zionist movement. The document listed four central pro-Zionist arguments which needed to be challenged. First, that Zionism was beneficial to the US and England, second and third social and economic as well as religious and ethnic arguments in favor of Zionism and lastly, the Arab behavior during the war, i.e. the collaboration of influential elements of the Arab national movement like the Mufti with the Third Reich. The concept budgeted the immense sum of 300'000 British pounds a year for the project, an amount of almost 12 million British pounds in the currency rate of 2016, one third of which was to be consigned to the Arab Office in the US.<sup>622</sup>

At first, the Egyptian diplomat, Mahmoud Fawzy Bey, was proposed to take up the post of director of the Arab Office in the US.<sup>623</sup> However, Ahmed Shukairy was later chosen for the post of the director. Shukairy would rise to notoriety in the 1960s for his bellicose statements as the chairman of the PLO. He was born in Lebanon in 1908, where his father had been detained by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, to a family of notables from

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<sup>621</sup> "Proposal for Arab Propaganda Offices in London and in Washington," in *1944-1946*, vol. 4, *The Arab League: British Documentary Sources*, 1995, 88–93.

<sup>622</sup> Sum calculated with the Bank of England inflation calculator "UK Inflation Calculator | Bank of England," accessed May 19, 2017, <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/default.aspx>; Arab League, "Concept for the Arab Office."

<sup>623</sup> "Proposal for Arab Propaganda Offices in London and in Washington."

Palestine. Returning to Akko in 1916, he was trained as a lawyer. In his youth, Shukairy gathered some experience in public and press relations. From 1929 until 1930, he worked as co-editor together with Akram Zuaiter of the newspaper *Mirat al-Sharq*. Its editorial line was close to the Nashashibi-led opposition to Amin al-Husseini and advocated a conciliatory stance toward the British. However, in the 1930s, he became active in the nationalist Istiklal party, working as a lawyer for the party's leader, Awni Abd al-Hadi, in Jerusalem. In this function, he defended Arabs implicated in the Arab Revolt in the British courts. During the early 1940s, he still counted among the Mufti's critics. However, after the war, he was politically active alongside Musa Alami, an association which certainly helped him to get the post at the Arab Office.<sup>624</sup>

Shukairy arrived in the US in late July 1945. After discussing the location of the future Office with the Arab ministers already present in the country, they agreed to open it in New York. However, the Central Office in Jerusalem overruled their decision in favor of opening the Office in Washington. It took Shukairy more than two months after his arrival before the Office became operational and was able to address the broader public, in the meantime missing many important events.<sup>625</sup> Shukairy registered the body on September 21, 1945 as a foreign agent for the seven member states of the Arab League. Between July and October, the Office received 55'000 dollars from the Syrian and Iraqi legations. The bulk of the money came from the Syrians, who donated 40'000 dollars. At the start, Shukairy was assisted by five staff members: Khulusi Khairy, Dr. Nejla Izzedin, Awni W. Dajani, Raja W. Hourani and Omar Abu Khadra.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39*, 25–26; משה שמש, התחייה הלאומית הפלסטינית: בצל משבר מנהיגות מהמופתי עד שקירי, 1937-1967 (מכון 385, 2012), Philip Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians* (New York: Facts on File, 2000), 365–66.

<sup>625</sup> Jewish Agency and Ahmad Shukairy, "From Jerusalem to Washington - Hebrew Translation" April 15, 1947, CZA S25/4153; Arab Office, "Internal Report on the Activities of the Arab Office, Washington for the First Six Months Beginning Nov. 1. 1945" February 12, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>626</sup> Ahmad Shukairy and United States Department of Justice, "Arab Office Registration Statement" September 21, 1945, CZA A289-49.

Arab public diplomacy also extended to Canada. However, unlike in later years, there was initially no public diplomacy push by the Arab League in South America.<sup>627</sup> Since around 1943, a Canadian-Arab Friendship League led by two Syrians had been active in the country. They wrote press releases and letters, organized public events and invited American anti-Zionist activists, like Philip Hitti or Faris Malouf, to tour the country. They also published a monthly circular called the *Canadian Arab*.<sup>628</sup>

The young Lebanese Nejla Izzedin was the most active and the most brilliant among the Washington staff members. Izzedin was a product of the Middle East elite, which had profited greatly from the missionary educational projects. She was descended from a distinguished Druze family of landholders and grew up close to Beirut. She enjoyed a high school education at the American School for Girls in Beirut, a missionary establishment, before leaving for Paris where she received her baccalaureate in 1927. She then continued her career in the US, first at Vassar College and then at the University of Chicago, where she graduated with a PhD in Arab history in 1934 on 'The Racial Origins of the Druzes'. The next eleven years she spent in the Middle East, teaching and researching at different colleges and universities in Beirut, Damascus and Iraq. During this time, she also collaborated with Constantine Zurayk to publish a multivolume study on the medieval Egyptian historian Ibn al-Furat.<sup>629</sup> At the time, Zurayk was also staying in the US capital, where he worked for the Syrian embassy in Washington until 1947. Philip Hitti had been Zurayk's mentor since his stint at the AUB in 1924 and they maintained contact in the US. Thus, Zurayk asked Hitti to help the Arab Office reedit a pamphlet with the title "Why Palestine?", which Zurayk felt was of insufficient quality. Later, Zurayk would become one of the foremost nationalist

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<sup>627</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Arab Activities in Argentina, Mexico and Guatamala" September 25, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

<sup>628</sup> Jewish Agency, "Arab Propaganda Activities in Canada" September 14, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

<sup>629</sup> Nejla Mustapha Izzedin, "The Racial Origins of the Druzes" (The University of Chicago, 1944); Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahim Ibn al-Furāt, Qustantin Zurayq, and Nejla Mustapha Izzedin, *The history of Ibn al-Furāt* (Beirut: Typ. American Press, 1936); Jewish Agency, "Biography of Miss Nejla Izzedin" 1945, CZA A289-49.

thinkers of the Arab world. After his time in Washington, he joined the AUB as a professor of history, before serving as its president from 1954 until 1957. In his 1948 book '*The Meaning of Disaster*' (Arab. *Maana al-Nakba*) he analyzed the causes for the Arab defeat in the Israel War of Independence and simultaneously coined the Arab term for the event.<sup>630</sup>

The Syrian embassy in Washington, where Zurayk worked, also handled the affairs of Saudi Arabia, which had no office of its own. In mid-October 1945, the Syrian ambassador to Washington, Nazim al-Kudsi, held a reception dinner for an Arab League delegation at the Mayflower hotel in Washington, with the diplomatic staff of Arab and Muslim countries in Washington and Arab-American dignitaries attending the event.<sup>631</sup> On October 3, 1945, a delegation of the Arab League made up by the Arab ministers in Washington visited the State Department to protest president Truman's support for admitting 100'000 Jewish refugees to Palestine. They met with Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson and Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs Loy Henderson, the latter a known opponent of Zionism.<sup>632</sup> That same day, the Arab Office released a statement to the press signed by Shukairy, protesting Truman's plans and demanding a return to the White Paper policy of 1939. The statement argued that with the defeat of Nazi Germany there was no longer a need for a "*Jewish haven*" in Palestine. Instead of a Jewish state, the statement promised the establishment of an Arab democratic state, in which the rights of the minorities would be protected.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Hani Faris, "Constantine K. Zurayk: Advocate of Rationalism in Modern Arab Thought," in *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses: Studies in Honor of Dr. Constantine Zurayk*, 1988, 3–6; Seikaly, "Constantine Zurayk: Beginnings, 1931–1939," 295; Constantin Zurayk, "Letter to Philip Hitti," March 27, 1946, PHP 9.24.

<sup>631</sup> Jewish Agency, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 6)" October 23, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

<sup>632</sup> Jewish Agency, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 3)" October 3, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

<sup>633</sup> Ahmad Shukairy, "Statement on Jewish Immigration to Palestine," October 3, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

One of the first actions of the Arab Office was to address the Arab-American community in advertisements published in the country's Arab language newspaper. This was in line with the 1944 Arab League draft proposal. The ads described the mission of the Arab Office as promoting understanding between the Arab world and the US, calling on Arab-Americans to support their home countries, also for the good of the US. Palestine was not yet mentioned.<sup>634</sup> The negative stance towards Zionism was not shared by all in the Arab-American community. There was significant support for Zionism among the Lebanese Maronites.<sup>635</sup> In the fall of 1945, shortly before the arrival of the Arab League delegation, the Patriarch's delegate Antoun Aql toured the US, warning that an expanding Arab League and Syria posed a threat to the independence of Lebanon. He expressed sympathy for Zionism, drawing parallels between the situations of the Christians in Lebanon with that of the Jews in Palestine.<sup>636</sup> The Lebanese government reacted harshly to such statements, which broke the façade of Arab anti-Zionist consensus. When it withdrew the passport of the Patriarch's delegate, it caused a scandal within the Lebanese community. At the Conference of Lebanese Organizations in New York on September 15 and 16 1945, the delegates denounced the withdrawal as an action against the freedom of speech. The delegates also resolved to establish their own propaganda office in the US to publicize the view point of the Lebanese community. The plan seems not to have been realized. The resolutions were subsequently published in the Arabic language newspaper *al-Hoda*, which was popular in the Lebanese community.<sup>637</sup> The Jewish agency also considered

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<sup>634</sup> Jewish Agency, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 3)."

<sup>635</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Israel's Covert Diplomacy in Lebanon* (Springer, 1997), 31–32.

<sup>636</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Conversation with Mr. Cecil Hourani" January 24, 1947, CZA S25/4153; Jewish Agency, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 4)" October 5, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

<sup>637</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Report on Lebanese Conference in New York" October 5, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

a collaboration with Maronite Americans to counter pan-Arab nationalist propaganda in the US.<sup>638</sup>

The official inauguration of the Arab Office eventually took place on October 4, 1945, when it organized a press conference and a cocktail party at the luxurious Wardman Park Hotel. Shukairy dodged tough questions from the press regarding the Mufti by insinuating that the Jews were exaggerating the situation of the Jewish refugees in Germany to score political points.<sup>639</sup> Some in the press however seemed to be more impressed with Shukairy's attire than with his statements: *"Anybody expecting to see the head of the Arab office dressed up like those Saudi Arabian princes were at San Francisco – all ready to hop on a camel and hump it across the desert – would have been disappointed. Mr. S. turned out to be a young lawyer, dressed in a natty blue suit and a little mustache, with his black hair slicked back over a high forehead. He spoke English better than most Americans – only one split infinite – and he is a smoothie."*<sup>640</sup> Interestingly, when asked why the Arab League invested so much effort into Palestine despite the country's smallness, he underlined its religious importance in Islam,<sup>641</sup> calling it a *"sacred, living museum of Arab history."*<sup>642</sup> Such religious and nationalist themes were rare in the Arab propaganda abroad. Frankness seemed to be one of Shukairy's traits. Vis-à-vis the journalist, he unapologetically declared himself to be a propagandist tasked *"to put out information to counteract the propaganda of the Zionists."*<sup>643</sup>

At first, the Arab Office staff believed that the press was boycotting them because of the alleged Jewish dominance of the trade. To prove their observation, they reported to Jerusalem that *"a great number of editors (...) are members of the Jewish faith"* and

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<sup>638</sup> Laura Zittrain Eisenberg, *My Enemy's Enemy: Lebanon in the Early Zionist Imagination, 1900-1948* (Wayne State University Press, 1994), 133–36.

<sup>639</sup> Jewish Agency, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 4)."

<sup>640</sup> Peter Edson, "Arabs in Washington," *Washington Daily News*, October 5, 1945.

<sup>641</sup> Jewish Agency, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 4)."

<sup>642</sup> Edson, "Arabs in Washington."

<sup>643</sup> Ibid.

that “a great part of (...) advertisements (...) originate from Jewish firms and organizations who of late have been exercising tremendous influence on all publicity sources to have them refrain from printing any new item that does not fall in harmony with the Zionists’ ambitions.”<sup>644</sup> When Khulusi Khairy succeeded in November 1945 in placing his first article in the magazine *Asia*, the Arab Office looked more optimistically to the future. *Asia*’s editors, the couple Richard J. Walsh and Pearl S. Buck, offered its pages to other anti-Zionist thinkers such as William E. Hocking. In the following months, the Arab Office staff participated in several debates and published its opinion through articles and letters in America’s leading newspapers, including the *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *Washington Post*, the *Jewish Chronicle* and many others.<sup>645</sup> The refugee question remained a recurring theme in these publications. In one article titled ‘From an Arab Spokesman’, which appeared in the *New Republic* on 28 January 1946, Samir Shamma demanded that the Jewish refugees in Europe be resettled elsewhere than Palestine. In a letter to the editor on 5 August 1946 in the same newspaper, Cecil Hourani made the same demand.<sup>646</sup> The Arab Office displayed zealous activity in the first half year of its existence. It bought advertisement space in the *New York Times* to challenge the ads of the Zionists, who allegedly had “unrestricted command of financial and material resources” at their disposal.<sup>647</sup> Moreover, it edited a bulletin sent to 3’000 opinion leaders and institutions, distributed press releases, held lectures and sought to socialize within Washington’s political and media circles. They were motivated by their correct belief that the Zionists ascribed paramount strategic importance to gaining US support for their movement: “It is obvious that the Zionists have pinned all their hopes on the United States. The importance which they attach to the winning of the American public opinion cannot possibly be exaggerated. To achieve this, the Zionists have organized a tremendous

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<sup>644</sup> Arab Office, “Internal Report on the Activities of the Arab Office, Washington for the First Six Months Beginning Nov. 1. 1945.”

<sup>645</sup> Ibid.

<sup>646</sup> Berman, *Nazism, the Jews, and American Zionism, 1933-1948*, 160; *ibid.*, n. 35.

<sup>647</sup> Arab Office, “Internal Report on the Activities of the Arab Office, Washington for the First Six Months Beginning Nov. 1. 1945.”



*campaign which penetration into every nook and cranny of the country and reaches almost every publication. Their tactics are largely based on capitalizing the sentiments of the Americans towards the refugees and displaced persons in Europe, as well as on the resentment with which the average American views the persecution inflicted by the Nazis. In addition, the Zionists have to a great extent succeeded in mobilizing Jewish influence in the United States – financial and otherwise. What non-Zionist Jewish element exists, which might be large in number, is nevertheless hardly articulate.*<sup>648</sup>

From the beginning, the Arab Office also paid great attention to academic circles. Charles Malik, the pro-Western Lebanese minister to the United States and the UN, who was a graduate of both the AUB and Harvard, approached US universities in order to organize a lecture tour of the country's universities in the winter of 1945 and 1946. Shukairy, Izzedin and Dajani, who spoke better English than the rest of the staff, were selected for the tour.<sup>649</sup> This tactical move was not surprising. The campus was an important battlefield and both detractors and supporters of Zionism were already active. Moreover, many in its network of non-Arab and Arab activists and sympathizers worked in academic positions or had good connections to academia, providing the pro-Arab lobby with a firm foothold at the universities. Among those were Virginia Gildersleeve, the dean of Barnard College, and the Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin, the former president of the Union Theological Seminary. Opposition to Zionism was particularly strong at Oriental Studies departments, with prominent Orientalists Philip Hitti at Princeton, John Hazm of City College or John Wilson at the University of Chicago being active in the movement. Harvard philosophy professor William Ernest Hocking was another influential voice against Zionism. In 1945, he penned the article 'Arab Nationalism and Political Zionism'. Arguments against the establishment of a Jewish state also resounded among those who were outside the anti-Zionist circles at the universities. William Yandell Elliott for instance, Professor of Government at

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<sup>648</sup> Ibid.

<sup>649</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Activities of Arab Office (No. 7)" November 5, 1945, CZA Z4/31551.

Harvard and an influential intellectual figure in post-War America, warned in a lecture that the Eastern European Jews would bring Communism to Palestine.<sup>650</sup>

However, Ahmad Shukairy's stint at the Arab Office lasted only a short while and he left the US on November 28, 1945.<sup>651</sup> Two years later, Shukairy published a 92-page booklet in the form of a diary about his trip from Palestine to the United States and his stay in the country, carrying the title 'From Jerusalem to Washington'. The account contained mostly personal reflections and revealed little about Shukairy's mission in Washington. A Jewish agency report dismissively commented: "*More than teaching us about the activity of the Arab offices and about their attitude towards the United States and the Jews, the booklet is testament to the limited capability to direct modern propaganda.*"<sup>652</sup>

There were also several indications that the propaganda campaign was not going as well as they had expected. In November 1945, A.H. Tandy, First Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington, spoke with the second director of the Arab Office in Washington, Khulusi Khairy, and two of his colleagues, Radia Afnan and Dr. Izzedin. In their conversation with the British diplomat, the Arab delegates seemed to be exasperated by the high costs of their propaganda effort, having just spent \$800 for an advertisement in the *New York Times*, complaining that the Zionists had superior means. Tandy was not entirely convinced, remarking in his notes: "(...) *unless they are discreetly playing down their backing, I think they somewhat underrate the potentialities of their own fairy godmother, the oil companies.*"<sup>653</sup> The Arab propagandists, using anti-Semitic imaginary, generally overestimated Zionist influence

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<sup>650</sup> Stephen H. Norwood, *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 139–40.

<sup>651</sup> Arab Office, "Internal Report on the Activities of the Arab Office, Washington for the First Six Months Beginning Nov. 1. 1945."

<sup>652</sup> Jewish Agency and Shukairy, "From Jerusalem to Washington - Hebrew Translation."

<sup>653</sup> A. H. Tandy, "Arab League Information Office in Washington," November 22, 1945, CO 537/1741.

in the US and saw Zionism as a function of Jewish greed: “*Jews (...) with their flair for profit and ambitions for financial and economic power, foresaw the coming importance of the Middle Eastern area (...).*”<sup>654</sup> Nor were the Arab propagandists clear on their goals apart from preventing the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Thus, the British diplomat noted that the Arab delegates were not advocating an independent Arab Palestinian state, but a Greater Syria.<sup>655</sup>

The disappointment is also palpable in the correspondence between the Washington Office and the Central Office in Jerusalem. Four months after the opening of the Office in Washington, the center planned to open a branch office in New York. Khairy advised against this, arguing that New York was dominated by the Zionists and that the Arabs enjoyed no access there to the newspapers. Khairy suggested more investment in the conservative areas in the US, especially the “*Middle-West, an area considered to be especially favorable for an anti-Zionist viewpoint.*”<sup>656</sup> Khairy mentioned that unspecified British and Americans experienced in the field of propaganda shared his opinion that the Mid-West was the most promising region for anti-Zionist propaganda. Despite his reservations, together with Francis Kettaneh and the Syrian Consul, Rafik Ashy, they looked for suitable premises to host a second office in New York.<sup>657</sup> The American-Lebanese entrepreneur Francis Kettaneh was the scion of one of the leading industrial families of Lebanon. The Kettaneh family (also written as Kittaneh) enterprise acted as the agent of more than fifty US companies in the Middle East and was heavily involved in import-export trade with the US. It also owned stocks of companies in Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. Through Francis Kettaneh’s marriage with the niece of the Lebanese president, Bechara el-Khoury, the family also enjoyed access to the political leadership of the country. Francis Kettaneh enjoyed access to the highest political and business circles in the US. Thus, from 1947 to 1951, he sat on the Council of Foreign Relations, which was then chaired by Allan Dulles. Along with Charles Malik, he lobbied for closer US-Lebanese ties and a deeper involvement of the US in the region, as

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<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Khulusi Khairy, “Letter to the Arab Office in Jerusalem,” 1947, ANLP 275.19.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

successor to Britain.<sup>658</sup> Dulles and Kettaneh also maintained contact after the former had become the chief of the CIA in 1951. In their publicly available correspondence, which runs from 1951 to 1964, there is evidence that Kettaneh sometimes acted as an informer on Middle Eastern issues for Dulles. Allan Dulles thanks Kettaneh several times for information he provided, although the exact nature of the information is unspecified.<sup>659</sup> In another letter from 1963, he reported on “*a rather interesting development in atomic research as between the French and Israeli government.*”<sup>660</sup> However, this is not evidence that Kettaneh was supported by American Intelligence services during the debate on Zionism in the crucial years 1945 to 1947.

In the summer of 1946, the English-Lebanese Cecil Hourani was appointed as secretary of the Arab Office in Washington. When Hourani arrived in the US, the Arab Office had been suffering from a leadership crisis for some time. Ahmed Shukairy had already departed, and Khulusi Khairy was experiencing personal and professional troubles. His wife, who had only recently arrived, was apparently unhappy with their life abroad and urged him to return to Palestine.<sup>661</sup> The problems of the Arab Office were not only of a personal nature. In the opinion of Hourani, the Office under Khairy’s leadership had failed to produce the desired results. This was due to Khairy’s over-ambition to compete with Zionist propaganda in the US. When Khairy discovered that this goal was difficult to achieve, he “*almost reached the stage of a nervous breakdown*” and had to be sent back to Palestine, as Cecil Hourani told Epstein in January 1947.<sup>662</sup> The affair around Khairy and Nashashibi’s alleged links to the far-

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<sup>658</sup> Irene L. Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958* (Columbia University Press, 2006), 78–108, 130–31.

<sup>659</sup> Allen W. Dulles, “Letter to Francis Kettaneh,” June 23, 1953, AWDP 36.8; Allen W. Dulles, “Letter to Francis Kettaneh,” May 29, 1959, AWDP 36.8.

<sup>660</sup> Francis Kettaneh, “Letter to Allan W. Dulles,” October 16, 1963, AWDP 36.8.

<sup>661</sup> Cecil Hourani and Jewish Agency, “Points from a Letter from Cecil Hourani (25. 7. 1946)” February 12, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>662</sup> Eliahu Epstein and Anti-Nazi League, “Report on Arab Organizations and Individuals” September 5, 1947, CZA S25/4153; Epstein, “Conversation with Mr. Cecil Hourani,” January 24, 1947.

right probably added to the frustration, as Cecil Hourani intimated to private NSANL investigators operating incognito. He had been sent to Washington to correct their mistakes.<sup>663</sup> Hourani agreed with Musa Alami and Edward Attiyah, the head of the London Office, to limit the task of the Office to the distribution of information and to drop the more ambitious schemes to challenge the Zionists.<sup>664</sup>

Together with his brother Albert, Cecil had worked for British Intelligence in Cairo during the war under Brigadier Clayton, enjoying access to both the circles of British policy making in the Middle East and to the Arab nationalist leadership.<sup>665</sup> Cecil Hourani was a markedly more balanced figure than his colleagues, and entertained friendly relations with Jews. When Cecil Hourani travelled from Jerusalem to Washington, Ben Gurion took a seat next to him. Ben Gurion wrongly believed Hourani to be a chalutz, a Jewish pioneer. In the process, a friendly conversation ensued between the two representatives from opposing camps. This was typical for Cecil Hourani, who was a consummate pro-Western moderate, free of personal acrimony towards Jews and Zionists.<sup>666</sup> He would also regularly engage in exchanges of opinion with Eliahu Epstein. Epstein had become acquainted with the Hourani brothers when they had served under Clayton in Cairo and kept in touch with them when they later joined the Arab Office in Jerusalem.<sup>667</sup> Cecil regularly met with Epstein during his time in Washington, complaining to him about the lack of manpower to complete his task. Besides him, only Awni Dajani and Nejla Izzedin were working full-time at the Office. Izzedin carried the bulk of the work, giving 75 public speeches and appearing three times on radio during the six-month period from September 21, 1946 to March 21, 1947. Continuing their previous strategy, many of their appearances took place on the nation's campuses, with a particular focus on the Ivy League universities. In February and March of 1947, Hourani addressed audiences at Harvard and Georgetown.

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<sup>663</sup> M. Buzzi, "Report on Investigation of Arab Office" September 6, 1946, ANLP 276.5.

<sup>664</sup> Epstein, "Conversation with Mr. Cecil Hourani," January 24, 1947.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid.

<sup>666</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 58.

<sup>667</sup> Epstein, "Conversation with Mr. Cecil Hourani," January 24, 1947.

Epstein was apprehensive about the Arabs' intensive focus on academia: "*Although not a spectacular or much publicized item, this is one of the most useful, from the long-range point of view of Arab propaganda efforts in this country and at the same time one of the most dangerous to our interests.*"<sup>668</sup>

According to Hourani, the Arab Office only received limited support from the Arab legations located in Washington, except for Radia Afnan from the Iraqi legation. However, he held the Lebanese minister Charles Malik in highest esteem, claiming that "*nobody has contributed as much to the Arab cause in this country as Mr. Malik*".<sup>669</sup> Hourani also had good connections to the State Department, which was eager to listen to the Arab point of view. William Eddy, an adviser to Roosevelt on Arab Affairs, was a personal acquaintance. Eddy's grandfather had served as a missionary in Lebanon, where he converted Cecil Hourani's grandfather to Protestantism.<sup>670</sup> Cecil Hourani also collaborated with Ben Freedman, though they were careful not to publicize this fact.<sup>671</sup> Cecil succeeded in bringing the Arabists Garland Hopkins and Kermit Roosevelt together with Benjamin Freedman. They formed the Committee for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land. Later, Cecil Hourani came to regret the cooperation with Freedman, when he realized that he was primarily motivated by his hatred for Eastern European Jewry.<sup>672</sup> Benjamin Freedman's activities provoked anti-Nazi and Zionist organizations, which opposed the Arab propaganda effort.

The Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League (NSANL), a group which monitored and infiltrated pro-Nazi groups under the chairmanship of professor James H. Sheldon, is particularly noteworthy. The NSANL sought to prove the connection between the domestic anti-Semitic and far-right scene and the foreign propagandists. On May 7, 1946, the NSANL submitted a petition to President Truman, which was presented to Congress by representative Emmanuel Celler from New York. The memorandum urged the

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<sup>668</sup> Ibid.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid.

<sup>670</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 59–63.

<sup>671</sup> M. Buzzi, "Report on Investigation of Arab Office."

<sup>672</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 61.

president to launch an investigation into the activities of the Arab Office, alleging that its anti-Zionist campaign was inciting religious and racial hatred in order to advance foreign political goals. The memorandum accused Arab Office director Khulusi Khairy and Anwar Bekir Nashashibi of having cooperated with the far-right activist Gerald L.K. Smith and the anti-Semitic Blue Star Mothers group. Through its institution of an anti-Jewish boycott in November 1945 and in appointing the Mufti as the rightful representative of the Arabs in Palestine, the Arab League had revealed itself as an “*anti-democratic and authoritarian body*,” the petition continued.<sup>673</sup> The memorandum further stated that the Arab Office was coordinating with the Institute of Arab American Affairs, which it correctly identified as a successor organization of the Arab National League. The ANL, it reminded its readers, had itself collaborated with the German-American Bund and had been praised by Nazi newspapers. The propaganda of these pro-Arab organizations was anti-Semitic and “*bears many of the most obvious ideological criteria of fascism or Nazism – for example, in its insistence of an ultra-nationalism based on religious and racial lines, and in its demand for a total Arab hegemony even in areas such as the Lebanese Republic where the Christian population constitutes a definite numerical majority*.”<sup>674</sup>

The NSANL’s accusations were based on facts. The connection to the Mufti ran even deeper than was known at the time; Musa Alami, the head of the Arab Offices, formally reported to the Mufti, despite the fact that the two did not get along. According to Cecil Hourani, the Mufti was plotting with Arab League Secretary, Azzam Pasha, against Musa Alami, persuading all Arab governments except for Iraq to cut their financial donations to the Arab Offices.<sup>675</sup> However, the extreme right was hardly the main target of the Arab Office propaganda effort, as the Arabs and foremost Cecil Hourani were aware that contacts to open anti-Semites were pernicious to their efforts. He insisted in his autobiography that the Arab Office strove “*not to associate with the fringe groups*

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<sup>673</sup> Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, “Memorandum Concerning Propaganda Activities of the Arab Office in the United States,” Congressional Record - Appendix (Washington, May 7, 1946), CZA S25/4153.

<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

<sup>675</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 60–65.

of American political life (...) although some of them were anxious to get in touch with us and to demonstrate their 'sympathy' for our cause."<sup>676</sup> Vis-à-vis the British embassy, Khulusi Khairy also maintained that he had left a meeting when he became aware of the presence of anti-Semitic groups.<sup>677</sup> However, despite the accusations, even the new Arab Office chief, Cecil Hourani, was not careful to maintain a distance from the native far-right. When private investigators, who worked for the NSANL, broke into the Arab Office in September 1946, they found no incriminating material. But in a subsequent conversation with Hourani, they posed as Italian anti-Semites soliciting the support of the Arab League, which he granted.<sup>678</sup> On the morning of March 10, 1947, FBI agents raided the premises of the Arab Office in Washington. Musa Alami, who was then sojourning in Washington to meet with State Department officials, cancelled his appointments immediately.<sup>679</sup> The FBI raid, which did not result in an arraignment, did not damage the Arab cause in the United States. On the contrary, because of the publicity caused by the affair, contacts with civil society, churches, schools and universities multiplied.<sup>680</sup>

Still, Cecil Hourani's mission to Washington had barely lasted a year, when in summer 1947 he was already preparing his return to England. In a conversation with Epstein in June 1947, a disillusioned Cecil Hourani called the Mufti *"the greatest menace to Arab interests in Palestine and to the Arab League."*<sup>681</sup> He blamed him and AHC representative to the UN, Emil Ghoury, for the failure to gain sympathy and support for

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<sup>676</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>677</sup> A. H. Tandy, "Telegram to Foreign Office," May 17, 1946, CO 537/1741; Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, "Memorandum Concerning Propaganda Activities of the Arab Office in the United States."

<sup>678</sup> M. Buzzi, "Report on Investigation of Arab Office."

<sup>679</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Letter to Executive Members of the Jewish Agency," March 10, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>680</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 62.

<sup>681</sup> Eliahu Epstein, "Conversation with Mr. Cecil Hourani" June 20, 1947, CZA S25/4153.



their Arab cause. Despite his opposition to the Mufti, Musa Alami refrained from criticizing him in public for fear of harming the Arab cause. Hourani indicated that there was growing opposition to the Mufti among the Arabs in Palestine and that their empowerment might eventually lead to a compromise with the Jewish national movement. However, he warned that both the Arabs in Palestine and the Arab states would never accept a Jewish state and would fight it until it is “*physically crushed*.”<sup>682</sup> The last staff addition to the Arab Office was Charles Issawi (1916-2000), a political science professor at AUB.<sup>683</sup> According to his own account, he still worked tirelessly to spread the Arab viewpoint in the US: *I lectured, I toured the country, I brought out the Arab News Bulletin (...). I was very active in trying to persuade Americans that their policy would lead to disaster*<sup>684</sup>, although these efforts apparently had little effect. The UN partition resolution on November 29, 1947, seems to have had a negative effect on the morale of the Arab propagandists.

Despite his earlier intentions to return to England, Hourani stayed on as secretary of the Arab Office. On December 2, 1947, he called a press conference to announce the liquidation of the Washington Office. The Office in New York had already been closed and plans for an additional Office in San Francisco were abandoned.<sup>685</sup> In May, the Office was finally closed, ending the Arab League’s propaganda campaign against the

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<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

<sup>683</sup> Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, “In Memoriam Charles Philip Issawi,” *Orient*, no. 43 (2002): 168.

<sup>684</sup> Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1994), 54–55 via; Miller, “More Sinned Against than Sinning? The Case of the Arab Office, Washington, 1945–1948,” 309.

<sup>685</sup> “Arab Office in New York Liquidated; Washington Bureau May Close This Month,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 3, 1947, <http://www.jta.org/1947/12/03/archive/arab-office-in-new-york-liquidated-washington-bureau-may-close-this-month>.

establishment of a Jewish state for the time being.<sup>686</sup> In his 1984 memoirs, Cecil Hourani defended his moderate propaganda approach against the Arab nationalist hardliners: *“Looking back at our efforts in Washington to present a reasonable case for an independent Palestinian state (...), it is clear to me that we were in fact following the only realistic method of conducting propaganda, which later generations of Arab propagandists have abandoned for more aggressive, more brazen methods which tend to produce exactly the opposite effect to that intended. (...) I loved America and the Americans I was meeting (...). Later Arab propagandists regarded America as the enemy, every American as a pro-Israeli, and every Jew as a Zionist, and with this attitude it is not surprising that they have had no impact on either public opinion of official policy, and that such support for the Palestinian cause as exists today is the product only of commercial and financial interest, or of anti-Israeli feeling, or of the efforts of American Jews who feel that Israel, in its own interests, should be more understanding and flexible in its treatment of the Palestinians.”*<sup>687</sup> In the six-month period between September 1946 and March 1947, the Office reported expenditures of roughly 100'000 dollars.<sup>688</sup> The Office operated from late July 1945 until mid-May 1948, more than 33 months. If we assume that the Office was fully operational until the partition decision in September 1947, and thereafter expended only half of its usual budget, we can estimate that the expenditures for the entire period amounted to 492'000 dollars, equivalent to 5.4 million US dollars in 2017.<sup>689</sup>

<b>Secretary</b>	Ahmad Shukairy (1945), Khulusi Khairy (1945-46)), Cecil Hourani (1946-48)
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<sup>686</sup> “2D ARAB OFFICE CLOSES; Washington Information Agency Discontinues Operation,” *The New York Times*, May 18, 1948, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9405EED9173CE733A2575BC1A9639C946993D6CF&legacy=true>.

<sup>687</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 64.

<sup>688</sup> Epstein and Anti-Nazi League, “Report on Arab Organizations and Individuals.”

<sup>689</sup> Calculated with the US inflation calculator “US Inflation Calculator,” *US Inflation Calculator*, accessed May 18, 2017, <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>.

<b>Collaborators</b>	Samir Shamma (1945-1946), Awni Dajani (1945-1947), Nejla Izzedin (1945-1947), Omar Abu Khadra (1945-1947), Anwar Bekir Nashashibi (1945-1946), Radia Afnan, Charles Issawi (1947-48)
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Table 1: Staff of the Arab Office

#### 4.5 The Arabs at the UN

With the end of the war, Jewish paramilitary groups started waging a guerilla war against British troops in Palestine. To reestablish calm, Britain was forced to station 100'000 servicemen in Palestine, further burdening the struggling economy.<sup>690</sup> On February 14, 1947, the British cabinet eventually had had enough and decided to relegate the Palestine question to the UN. The first special session of the UN, which was scheduled to take place from April 28 to May 15, 1947, would be dedicated to the Palestine issue.<sup>691</sup> The Arab League made several preparations for the upcoming session in order to improve its standing at the UN. In early 1947, the Arab League commissioned the IAAA staff member, Omar Haliq, to investigate the situation of the Arab representatives at the UN. After speaking to the Syrian Delegate, Constantin Zurayk, as well as the British and the Syrian delegates, he learnt that no one had received any instructions on how to present the Palestine issue to the UN. There were only five Arab states in the UN in 1947, too few to prevent the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. In a report he sent to the Arab League, Haliq concluded that the only way to a majority would be through appealing to Muslim and friendly states: *“The Arab chances to success in the session of the General Assembly depend a lot on the extent of their activities in the spreading of propaganda in the corridors of the (...) UN and in*

<sup>690</sup> On the guerilla war against British troops in Palestine, see Bruce Hoffman, *Anonymous Soldiers: The Struggle for Israel, 1917-1947* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2015).

<sup>691</sup> United Nations, “Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly during Its First Special Session” (1947), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/310](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/310).

*the exploitation (...) of the creation of political blocs with the countries which are interested in the friendship of the Arabs (...).*<sup>692</sup> Omar Haliq ascribed special importance to Latin America, which had voted with the Arab bloc in the General Assembly in the past. He therefore advised that a Christian delegation be sent to Latin American countries. In the words of Haliq, it was *“to make use of the Catholic hate of the Jews on the entire planet for the good of the Arabs.”*<sup>693</sup>

It is likely that, as a result of the recommendations of the Haliq-report, in April 1947, the AHC sent a team of senior members, many of them experienced in the field of propaganda, to the US. All of them were men loyal to the AHC leader Amin al-Hussein, the Mufti. The selection included Rasim Khalidi, a former leader of the Islamist Young Men's Muslim Association and a cousin of Ismail and Hussein Khalidi, who had followed the Mufti from Bagdad into his German exile during the war. For this reason, the US did not grant him a visa. The final team consisted equally of three Christians and three Muslims: Senior propagandist Emil Ghoury, Henry Kattan and Issa Nakhla, both prominent lawyers from Jerusalem, as well as the Muslims Akram Zuaiter, Khalil Budayri and Rajai Hussein. Budayri was a leftist politician and doctor from Jerusalem. Rajai Hussein, a relative of the Mufti, had worked in the propaganda office in London. In the conflict between Musa Alami and the Mufti, he sided with the latter and therefore resigned from his post in April 1947.<sup>694</sup>

The Arabs sought a debate in the General Assembly on the immediate independence of an Arab majority Palestinian state, but the majority chose to wait for the results of UNSCOP. They were also defeated when they tried to separate the Palestine question

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<sup>692</sup> Omar Haliq and Jewish Agency, “‘Palestinian Delegate’ in New York to the Higher Arab Committee and the Arab League,” March 24, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid.

<sup>694</sup> Jewish Agency, “Biographical Sketches of HAC Delegation to the UN” May 1947, CZA S25/4153; Levenberg, *Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945-1948*, 104.

from the issue of the Jewish DPs in Europe.<sup>695</sup> Still, the UN special session on Palestine resolved to set up a Special Committee to investigate the conditions in Palestine, which came to be known under its acronym UNSCOP. The UNSCOP report was to be presented at the autumn session of the UN in the same year (September 16 – November 29, 1947).<sup>696</sup> Despite the setback, Azzam Pasha, the Secretary General of the Arab League, looked optimistically towards the next session: *"On the whole, we feel we are departing from this special session in a better position than when we arrived. Our views are now better understood throughout the world. It is the Zionist objective to have political power and a Zionist state. The way in which the Jewish Agency explained this made the situation clear to everyone on the outside."*<sup>697</sup>

The AHC chose to boycott the UNSCOP, accusing it of being pro-Zionist, while the Jewish Agency paid great attention to it, attaching three officials, including the later Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban, to it. This certainly contributed to their conclusions. When the committee members visited Palestine, they were struck positively by the achievements of the Zionist movement in developing the country. The Arab inhabitants on the other hand failed to impress even those UNSCOP members from the Middle East. Moreover, their visit to Palestine coincided with the arrival of the Exodus, an affair which illustrated the plight of the Jewish refugees in Europe and British intransigency. The Arabs, to whom UNSCOP spoke despite the AHC boycott, made an uncompassionate and radical impression. To illustrate, AHC member and Jerusalem mayor, Hussein al-Khalidi, stated that the Jews had no historical rights in Palestine. In order to make up for the lack of an official AHC representation, UNSCOP also consulted Arab officials from Lebanon, Jordan and from the Arab League. For the most part, these officials expressed the Arab consensus that no Jewish refugees should be admitted to Palestine and that an independent Arab state should be established on its soil. But there were dissenters. In private meetings, Maronite figures expressed support for partition and a Jewish state. Likewise, King Abdullah supported partition,

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<sup>695</sup> Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (Yale University Press, 2008), 40–52.

<sup>696</sup> United Nations, Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its first special session.

<sup>697</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute of Arab American Affairs*, vol. 2, 11, 1947, 6.

wishing to occupy the Arab parts of Palestine. After visiting the DP camps in Germany, UNSCOP returned to Geneva to write its report, where it was subjected to lobbying efforts from all sides. This included Musa Alami, who sought to influence the British liaison officer to UNSCOP. UNSCOP eventually decided to recommend the partition of the country along demographic lines, signing the report on August 31, 1947. Between late September and November 1947, the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine prepared a resolution based on the recommendation of the UNSCOP report. During its course, the State Department, the Foreign Office and the Arab states successfully lobbied the Ad Hoc Committee to have the size of the Jewish state reduced to 55% of Palestine, the bulk of it being infertile Negev desert.<sup>698</sup> The Arab side reacted harshly to the UNSCOP report. Jamal Husseini warned that “(...) *blood will flow like rivers in the Middle East*,” while Arab League president Azzam compared the nascent Jewish state to the Crusaders’ kingdoms.<sup>699</sup> Like the former, the Jewish state will be destroyed by the Arabs in time, he prophesized.<sup>700</sup>

Despite the AHC’s refusal to work with UNSCOP, the AHC and the Arab League were aware of its importance for the future of Palestine. This is shown by their efforts to influence public opinion in both North and South America. After the end of the UN spring session, the Arab League set up its own special committee in New York to oversee its diplomatic and propagandistic activities in North and South America to gain a favorable decision in November. The special committee was staffed by the Arab representatives at the UN and the functionaries of the AHC. The Syrian, Fares el-Khoury, acted as chairman and Mahmud Fawzi as secretary. The committee further included the Lebanese Charles Malik, the Iraqi Awni al-Khalidi, the Saudi Asad al-Faquihi as well as the AHC representative, Wassif Kamal. The Jewish Agency reported that a budget of 100’000 dollars was at the committee’s disposal to lobby on behalf of an independent Arab Palestine in the UN. To the frustration of Arab League president, Azzam Pasha, the special committee was reportedly under the sway of AHC delegate

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<sup>698</sup> Morris, 1948, 40–52.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid.

Wassif Kamal und thus the Mufti.<sup>701</sup> According to the Jewish Agency, Wassif Kamal had spent World War II in Turkey and Italy, and was close to the Germans.<sup>702</sup>

Latin America, the largest voting bloc in the UN, was especially contested between the Zionists and the Arabs. The dominance of the Catholic Church, which generally rejected Zionism, as well as the presence of sizable Arab and German communities all worked against Zionism. According to the Zionists, the South American countries tended to move progressively into the anti-Zionist camp in the course of 1947. They also blamed an “*intensive campaign*” by the Arabs for this development, which involved “*commercial pressure, diplomatic pressure, bribery*”.<sup>703</sup> Indeed, in accordance with Omar Haliqs recommendations, the Arabs dedicated great attention to Latin America. Issa Nakhla and Akram Zuaiter acted as roving ambassadors in North and South America during 1947. Nakhla had already gathered experience in public diplomacy during his study years in London prior to World War II, where he worked at the Arab propaganda office under Izzat Tannous. Zuaiter was a hardliner and militant who had joined the Arab Revolt. After fleeing the country, he allegedly worked as a liaison for the Mufti with the Germans. In 1941, he was involved in the pro-German Iraqi coup of Rashid al-Gaylani, forcing him to flee to Turkey, where he spent the rest of the war.<sup>704</sup> As already mentioned, upon his arrival in the US, Nakhla toured the East Coast and the Mid-West to meet with Arab-Americans and pro-Arab groups. The special committee was also responsible for organizing a propaganda campaign in South America, for which 25'000 dollars had been set aside. To this purpose, the special committee produced material in the local languages and dispatched two delegations to Latin America, one chaired by Akram Zuaiter and the other by Mustafa Khalidi, an

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<sup>701</sup> Eliahu Epstein, “Arab Activities Preparatory to the September Session of the United Nations General Assembly” July 11, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>702</sup> Jewish Agency, “Biographical Sketches of HAC Delegation to the UN.”

<sup>703</sup> Morris, 1948, 53–54.

<sup>704</sup> Jewish Agency, “Biographical Sketches of HAC Delegation to the UN”; Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, 470.

AUB professor. Moreover, an Arab Office was established in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>705</sup> In Brazil, Zuaite's delegation attended the Pan-American Conference and met with notable figures of its society. They also held a rally for the Arab community in Brazil, where they promised to conserve the Arab character of Palestine.<sup>706</sup>

The Arabs also placed their hopes in the Catholic countries of Europe. The Greek Catholic Archbishop, George Hakim, was dispatched in summer 1947 on a tour of Catholic Europe. His first station was Italy, where he met with the pope. He then proceeded to France and Belgium.<sup>707</sup> They especially hoped to gain the vote of France with its sizeable Muslim population in the colonies. If they succeeded, they also had a high chance of winning the votes of the Benelux states.<sup>708</sup> In October 1947, the AHC therefore opened the Political Mission of the AHC (Fr. *Mission politique du Comité Suprême Arabe à Paris*) under the leadership of Yakoub Khoury. Khoury regularly met with French dignitaries and edited a bulletin during his time in France. The Jewish Agency however deemed him to be a “*poor defender of the Arab cause.*”<sup>709</sup> By nominating three Christians as delegates to the UN autumn session, the AHC again pursued its established strategy to co-opt Christian anti-Zionism and allay fears of Muslim persecution. Arab Christians had played an important role in the Palestinian national struggle, especially on its international front. They constituted a small, cosmopolitan and highly educated class. Emil Ghoury had served as the leading international propagandist for the AHC since at least 1936, as discussed above. Both Henry Kattan, a lawyer from Jerusalem who commuted between Paris and the AHC propaganda office in the US as well as Issa Nakhla were prominent Jerusalemite

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<sup>705</sup> Epstein, “Arab Activities Preparatory to the September Session of the United Nations General Assembly.”

<sup>706</sup> Jewish Agency and Al Wahda, “The A.H.E. Delegation to Brazil,” September 14, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>707</sup> “Archbishop Heads Arab Mission,” *The Universe*, September 5, 1947, CZA S25/4153.

<sup>708</sup> Morris, 1948, 56.

<sup>709</sup> Fischer, “Letter to Epstein, Berman, Linton of the Jewish Agency on HAC Activities in Paris,” October 9, 1947, CZA S25/4153.



lawyers of Christian origin. The strategy however was not successful. Most of Latin America and Catholic Europe voted for the UN resolution 181 on November 29, 1947 at the UN session in Lake Success. Issa Nakhla stayed in the US after the end of his mission. In 1956, he was elected as the head of the newly opened Arab League Office in Buenos Aires, which was said to coordinate its activities with the Arab League Information Center in New York. The Office in Buenos Aires complemented the existing Offices in Geneva, London, Bonn, Ankara, Rio de Janeiro and New Delhi.<sup>710</sup>

#### 4.6 Last Stand: The Committee for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land and the fight against Partition

The Holocaust had a deep impact on American Protestant attitudes towards Jews and Zionism. Both mainline and evangelical American Protestants began to confront the problem of anti-Semitism in their teachings, while interfaith initiatives, exemplified by the National Conference on Christians and Jews, broadened their public appeal and activity. Some preached that through supporting the Jews and fighting anti-Semitism, Christians could repay the debt that they owed to the Jewish people for their teachings, which had given birth to Christianity. Meanwhile, the mainline American Christian Palestine Committee urged the US government to push for the admission of Jewish refugees in Palestine and for the persecution of the Nazi crimes. The ascendancy of pro-Zionist Evangelism further increased popular sympathy for Zionism.<sup>711</sup>

However, anti-Zionism was still popular in certain parts of American Protestantism – especially in its missionary circles. The anti-Zionist ACJ sought to co-opt this feeling. On April 30, 1944, the ACJ published an editorial in several newspapers, which explained the Reform Jewish anti-Zionist position to Christian readers. While they were supportive of settling the refugees in Palestine, they rejected Zionism and considered Judaism to be solely a religion. The editorial excoriated the Zionists for having led the

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<sup>710</sup> “Arab League Starts Propaganda Activities in Argentina: Opens Office,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, accessed May 20, 2017, <http://www.jta.org/1956/09/28/archive/arab-league-starts-propaganda-activities-in-argentina-opens-office>.

<sup>711</sup> Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 36–47.

Christians astray into supporting Zionism, as they “were led to believe that friendship for the Jews necessitated the acceptance of the Zionist formula; and so they made that acceptance, although with misgivings.”<sup>712</sup> Subsequently, the ACJ sent the editorial to hundreds of Christian representatives and solicited their responses. The 150 mostly positive responses the ACJ received were then printed in a brochure titled ‘Christian Opinion on Jewish Nationalism and the Jewish State’. Among the responders were such figures as Richard Niebuhr, the brother of Reinhold, Merle Davis of the American Friends Board of Missions, and Henry Sloan Coffin, the president of the Union Theological Seminary in New York from 1926 till 1945, who charged that the Jewish state “would seriously complicate Jewish-Christian relations in this country and in other lands.”<sup>713</sup> The co-optation of Christian anti-Zionism by the ACJ was a win-win game for both sides. On one hand, it helped the ACJ to escape its isolation in the Jewish community and reach a broader audience. On the other hand, it shielded Christian anti-Zionists from the accusation of being anti-Semite. It was a strategy which would prove itself in the following years.<sup>714</sup>

In 1944 and 1945, the Foreign Mission Conference issued two documents on the Palestine issue, which were marked by their critical view of Zionism. In April 1944, the Foreign Mission Conference’s Committee on Work Among Moslems published an analysis of the Palestine issue, which was written by secretary, Gloria M. Wysner, and which unreservedly advocated the Arab point of view. Another statement was published by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America in October 1945. The publication centered on the critique of Jewish nationalism, warning that it risked the disfranchisement of Jewish communities in the West. The theme had been prominent in the *Christian Century*, as we have seen, and in the Reform Jewish critique of Zionism.<sup>715</sup> In the years 1947 and 1948, the pages of *Christian and Crisis* also offered

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<sup>712</sup> *Christian Opinion on Jewish Nationalism and a Jewish State ; with a Foreword by Morris S. Lazaron* (American Council for Judaism, 1945), 5.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., 10; Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 31–32.

<sup>714</sup> see also Wilford, *America’s Great Game*, 88.

<sup>715</sup> Glora M Wysner, Foreign Missions Conference of North America, and Committee on Work Among Moslems, *Dilemma in Palestine* (New York, N.Y.: Committee of

a platform to debate the Palestine issue. Henry Sloan Coffin repeated the standard Protestant anti-Zionist argument that the Jews had lost the right to a Jewish nation. The Land of Israel had been promised to the Jews on the condition that they followed divine law, but “*Israel notoriously failed to fulfill this condition.*”<sup>716</sup> He further claimed that the US had risked its good relations with the Muslim world in exchange for Jewish votes. The debate continued after the acceptance of partition in the UN on November 29. Then current president of the Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Henry Van Dusen, shared Coffin’s analysis, arguing that support for Zionism did not result from humanitarian concerns for the Jewish refugees, but from “*shrewd calculation of the voting strength of their American kinsmen (...)*”.<sup>717</sup> AUB president Bayard S. Dodge, who was at the time on a fundraising tour in the US, warned that if the American Jews were more loyal to Israel than to America, “*it will increase anti-Semitism in America.*”<sup>718</sup> Garland Hopkins, a member of the Methodist Board on Missions, was another discussant of missionary background who criticized the partition decision in the pages of *Christianity and Crisis*. Many of the voices cited here would join the anti-Zionist Protestant groups, which became active in 1948 and will be discussed below. That the Protestant missionary circles almost unanimously tilted to the Arab side was also observed by contemporaries like Reinhold Niebuhr. While the Protestants had failed to convert the Muslim and even the Christian Arabs to Western Christianity, Arab nationalism had succeeded in raising understanding, if not sympathy, among the missionaries.<sup>719</sup>

The Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land, which was constituted in early 1948, was a product of the missionary concern with Zionism. It lobbied to have the US revise its support for the partition resolution from November 29, 1947. The new group

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Work Among Moslems, Foreign Missions Conference of North America, 1944); “Statement of the Foreign Missions Conference,” *Christian Century*, November 7, 1945; via Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 85–86.

<sup>716</sup> Henry Sloan Coffin, *Christianity and Crisis*, August 4, 1947.

<sup>717</sup> Henry Van Dusen, *Christianity and Crisis*, February 2, 1948.

<sup>718</sup> Bayard Dodge, *Christianity and Crisis*, February 2, 1948.

<sup>719</sup> Citations via Fishman, *American Protestantism and a Jewish State*, 95–98.

recruited its members from among the same Protestant missionary and Arabist circles which had already formed the bulk of the membership of the American Friends of the Arabs in the late 1930s. Among those were Paul Hutchinson and Garland Evans Hopkins, board members of the *Christian Century* journal, and Henry Sloan Coffin of the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Bayard S. Dodge, AUB president, Kermit Roosevelt and Daniel Bliss, the nephew of the AUB founder, were associated with the missionary circles.<sup>720</sup> Some were employed by the government, such as the Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and Harald B. Minor from the NEA. With Terry Duce and William Eddy, the former US minister to Saudi Arabia and now consultant for Aramco, the oil lobby was also well represented in the Committee.<sup>721</sup> The board reflected the fact that the Committee was not solely representative of the anti-Zionist missionary element, although it was an important constituent, but stood on a far broader footing.

Kermit Roosevelt and Virginia Gildersleeve were the leading personalities behind the formation of the Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land. Both were also sitting on the board of the IAAA.<sup>722</sup> Roosevelt was the nephew of Theodore Roosevelt. During the war, he had served for the OSS in the Middle East. From 1945 to 1947, he was officially commissioned to write an history of the OSS record in the Middle East. However, he spent most of his time travelling the Middle East with his wife, meeting dignitaries and experts on their way and writing articles on the region for US newspapers. The experiences of these years were later turned into his book '*Arabs, Oil and History*', which was published in February 1949.<sup>723</sup> The book was sharply critical of the role the British had played in the Middle East. On the other hand, he believed in the soundness of the American-Arab friendship, the base of which had been laid in the missionary enterprise. Kermit Roosevelt heaped praise on the class of young Arab nationalists, many of them educated at Western institutions like the AUB. This was the group that Roosevelt met in his travels in the Middle East and in

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<sup>720</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid., n. 14, 209.

<sup>722</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 289.

<sup>723</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, *Arabs, Oil and History* (London, 1949), <http://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=US201300459944>.

Washington, where they staffed the Arab legations and the Arab Office. Co-opting these ‘young effendis’, as Roosevelt called them, adopting a term coined by British Arabist, Freya Stark, was the best safeguard against both Communist intrusion in the Middle East and the Islamic extremists of the sort of the Muslim Brotherhood, he advised.<sup>724</sup> However, he believed that the US was doing the opposite of his prescribed policy by supporting Zionism, which was estranging the Arabs from the West and its values. Roosevelt cited an example from the UN, where an Arab delegate had told him, that *“If it is possible for less than a million Zionists to lead more than 140 million peoples into an act which is contrary both to their principles and to their interests, there must be something wrong with democracy”*.<sup>725</sup> Roosevelt warned that this estrangement from the West would riskencouraging *“an isolationist, fanatically reactionary, and xenophobic force which will dominate an important segment of the world (...)”*.<sup>726</sup> It is noteworthy that support for the ‘young effendis’ became the policy of the Eisenhower administration in which Kermit Roosevelt served as a CIA chief for the Middle East.<sup>727</sup>

Upon his return to the US from the Middle East in the fall of 1947, Kermit Roosevelt started a nationwide lecture tour under the title ‘The Arabs Live Here Too’. Already in June 1947, George Levison had expressed his interest in enlisting Kermit Roosevelt in their anti-Zionist campaigning in a letter to Elmer Berger. As noted above, the ACJ had an interest in co-opting Christian anti-Zionists to broaden their appeal. In November 1947, the ACJ chapter in Austin, Texas invited Roosevelt for a lecture at their chapter in Houston, defending him from accusations of anti-Semitism. The cooperation worked for both sides and would continue in the future.<sup>728</sup> In the same period, Roosevelt also worked with the Arab and Arab-American bodies operating in the US, joining the board of the IAAA and Benjamin Freedman’s short-lived League for

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<sup>724</sup> Wilford, *America’s Great Game*, 78–84.

<sup>725</sup> Roosevelt, *Arabs, Oil and History*, 82.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>727</sup> See Wilford, *America’s Great Game*; Michael Doran, *Ike’s Gamble: America’s Rise to Dominance in the Middle East* (New York: Free Press, 2016).

<sup>728</sup> Wilford, *America’s Great Game*, 84–89.

Peace with Justice in Palestine. He was also in touch with Cecil Hourani, the head of the Arab Office.<sup>729</sup>

In January 1948, Kermit Roosevelt published an article against Zionism in the *Middle East Journal*. Its title, 'The Partition of Palestine – a Lesson in Pressure Politics', already hinted at its main thesis. It argued that US political support for Zionism was the result of the lobbying of a small minority of American Zionists and a Democratic leadership that was all too willing to yield to their demands, repeating the standard anti-Zionist arguments that excessive Zionist influence might result in an anti-Semitic backlash. He cited the events around the Anglo-American inquiry to support his thesis. The recommendations of the April report to admit 100'000 Jewish refugees to Palestine were rejected by the British. In a statement on October 4, 1946 however, President Truman defied the British and supported their admittance. Roosevelt claimed in his article that this happened due to domestic pressure. The two Democratic runners for the posts of Governor and Senator of New York, James M. Mead and Herbert H. Lehman, expected their Republican contender, Thomas Dewey, to make a pro-Zionist statement. They felt at risk of losing the pro-Zionist vote and therefore urged President Truman to forestall such an outcome by making a statement by himself. Roosevelt's account was unoriginal and based on a newspaper report published by the *New York Times* on October 7, 1946.<sup>730</sup> Truman's support for Zionism, Roosevelt argued, went against the wisdom of the political experts. *"Almost all Americans with diplomatic, educational, missionary, or business experience in the Middle East protest fervently that support of political Zionism is directly contrary to our national interests, as well as to common justice. How then is our policy to be explained? Parts of the explanation - perhaps the most interesting parts - are still well-kept secrets."*<sup>731</sup> State Department officials had been warning since the 1920s that Zionism would strengthen Communism. This was also a central argument in Roosevelt's article. According to his analysis, the Soviet Union was pursuing several goals by supporting Zionism and the partition of Palestine: Creating a military foothold in the region, spreading chaos, and

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<sup>729</sup> Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans*, 289; Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 61.

<sup>730</sup> Roosevelt, "The Partition of Palestine," 1948, 6–12.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

helping to mainstream the principle of partition which could help Middle Eastern minorities friendly to Soviet influence like the Kurds establish their own independent states. This was a grave danger because the Middle East was to be one of the central arenas of the Cold War due to its strategic location and the abundance of oil, which could not be lost: *"If a position in the Middle East was essential to winning the war against Germany, we are now learning that it is equally essential to winning the peace against Soviet Russia."*<sup>732</sup>

Roosevelt's interpretation of the events which led to the establishment of the Jewish state has invariably become authoritative for a branch of historiography which is highly critical of Zionism. It enjoyed high popularity from the start, also being published by the IAAA in a pamphlet in mid-1948.<sup>733</sup> The British and the American foreign policy establishment shared Kermit Roosevelt's opinion that Truman's pro-Zionist policy was largely motivated by domestic interests. Truman may have been partly to blame for this perception. According to Arabist William Eddy, he had stated in a 1945 talk with the US Chief of Mission in the Middle East that he had *"to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism, I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents."*<sup>734</sup> Whether authentic or not, this was a sound democratic argument, as the foreign policy of a country naturally also had to reflect the views of its people. The problem was that for a great many foreign policy officials, American and Jewish American interests seemed to be inherent opposites. However, those who were close to the president in these crucial moments have contradicted Roosevelt's narrative. Clark Gifford, then acting as the president's advisor and a major pro-Zionist voice within the government, rejected it vehemently. Similarly, Dean Acheson, who can hardly be suspected of pro-Zionist leanings, asserted in his memoirs that Truman was driven by conviction and not by *"political opportunism."*<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>733</sup> Roosevelt, *The Partition of Palestine*, 1948.

<sup>734</sup> William Alfred Eddy, *FDR Meets Ibn Saud*, 1 (American Friends of the Middle East New York, 1954), 35, <http://susris.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/100222-fdr-abdulaziz-eddy.pdf>; Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, 89.

<sup>735</sup> Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, II. 430–465.

The narrative also ignores the existence of significant domestic and government internal pressure to refrain from recognizing the nascent Jewish state.

Virginia Gildersleeve was the public face of the Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land. Gildersleeve was not only a recognized advocate of women's rights, but also a long-time anti-Zionist. She wanted to have her activity for the committee understood as a humanitarian gesture, criticizing Christian supporters of Palestine as the true bigots, and alleging that "*some (...) advocated the project because it would relieve us of doing anything ourselves to help the exiles.*"<sup>736</sup> A review of her biography casts serious doubts on her humanitarian feelings for the Jews. Gildersleeve served as the Dean of Barnard College, a women's liberal arts college associated with Columbia University, for more than thirty years (1911-47). Despite the college's high percentage of Jewish students and her own claim that she always had an interest in Jews, her relationship with them was strained. During her tenure, Barnard introduced a holistic admission system which was discriminatory to Jewish students. Before World War I, Jews had represented forty percent of Barnard's student body. Recruiting from outside New York and putting greater emphasis on 'character' instead of academic achievements, Barnard and Columbia reduced the quota of Jewish students to twenty percent in the next two decades.<sup>737</sup> During the 1930s, she repeatedly stood out for her expressions of sympathy for national-socialistic Germany and fascist Italy. Returning from a trip to Germany in 1935, she defended Germany's anti-Semitic policies to reduce the number of Jewish student enrollments, arguing that there was a lack of professions that the Jews were active in, as though this would help Jews to find employment in other professions. As the cofounder of the International Federation of University Women, she further defended the National Socialists' record on women's emancipation, although they had also capped the number of female students.<sup>738</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace*, 63.

<sup>737</sup> Rosalind Rosenberg, "Virginia Gildersleeve: Opening the Gates," accessed June 3, 2016, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/alumni/Magazine/Summer2001/Gildersleeve.html>.

<sup>738</sup> Stephen H. Norwood, *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 104–5.



Germany and Italy's colonization projects in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean were also legitimate in her view, and she was convinced that "*the world eventually would be forced to recognize*" this.<sup>739</sup> In sum, for sympathy, lack of information or both, she publicly misrepresented the actions and dangers emanating from national-socialist and fascist Europe.

Gildersleeve became interested in Middle Eastern affairs mainly through the mediation of Charles R. Crane. It was also in his house that she made the acquaintance of Mary Mills Patrick, President of the American College for Girls in Scutari, in the early 1920s. For the next two decades (1924-44), she served as a member of the board for the institution, becoming its chairperson in 1944. She also served as a board member for the Near East College Association, which included the American Universities in Cairo and Beirut, a hotbed of Arab nationalism. Her association with the latter and its graduates exercised considerable influence on her thought. Given the fact that these missionary schools primarily served the Christian population before World War I, it is conspicuous that she never discusses the Armenian and Christian genocide in her autobiography. When speaking about the American College for Girls in Scutari, Gildersleeve notes that from the 1920s onward, the student body became increasingly Turkish and less multiethnic. Still she is full of praise for Atatürk's state building project. Her seeming lack of sympathy with the region's Christian inhabitants was more than compensated for by her admiration and support for the Arabs. She took pride in the American missionaries' contribution to the development of the Middle East, subscribing to her personal acquaintance George Antonius' thesis, that Americans had been instrumental in kindling Arab nationalism.<sup>740</sup>

In late February 1948, Kermit Roosevelt, Virginia Gildersleeve and Garland E. Hopkins sent a telegram to many prominent persons to ask them to join the new organization. On March 2, the organization was officially established with Roosevelt acting as its executive director and Garland E. Hopkins as secretary. Apparently inexperienced at the task of organizing a new body from scratch, Roosevelt received coaching from ACJ

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<sup>739</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>740</sup> Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve, *Many a Good Crusade: Memoirs* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 173–76.

leader, Elmer Berger. Pursuing the goal to lobby for the rescission of American support for partition, Roosevelt organized for a committee delegation to meet with George Marshall in the first half of March 1948. During the meeting, Marshall apparently hinted at the fact that a decision to rescind partition was in the making, thereby delighting the visitors.<sup>741</sup> On March 19, 1948, to the surprise of most observers, the American delegate to the UN, Warren Austin, declared in the Security Council that the US was backtracking from the partition resolution and instead recommended “*a temporary trusteeship for Palestine (...) under the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations to maintain the peace and to afford the Jews and Arabs of Palestine (...) further opportunity to reach an agreement.*”<sup>742</sup> Naturally, the pro-Arab lobbyists saw the policy change as the result of their efforts and felt boosted. The statement was however soon overturned by President Truman and on May 14, he recognized Israel just 11 minutes after the Israeli declaration of independence in Tel Aviv. The American anti-Zionists had lost a battle which had lasted a quarter century. But they did not give up their efforts to push policy in a pro-Arab, anti-Israeli direction.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

Anti-Zionist activity in the US after World War II rested on the same pillars as before the war: Protestants, American-Arabs, Jewish anti-Zionists and the State Department. The last pillar was certainly the most influential one with regard to US policy. Here, the traditional enmity towards Zionism, which was also informed by anti-Jewish prejudice, as explained in Chapter Two, persisted. Moreover, geopolitical considerations weighed against the Zionists. The war had proven the strategic value of petroleum, petroleum existing in abundance in Saudi Arabia, which was ruled by the most reactionary and anti-Semitic ruler of the Arab states. US support for a Jewish state might risk this supply of oil to the US. Moreover, as was the case before the war, many warned that US support for a Jewish state might push the Arabs into the Soviet camp and facilitate Soviet penetration of the region. State Department Middle East experts like William

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<sup>741</sup> Wilford, *America's Great Game*, 90–91.

<sup>742</sup> “Statement Made by the United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin) Before the Security Council on March 19, 1948 1” March 19, 1948, FRUS, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V, Part 2, Document 105.

Eddy sought to stress these dangers, despite good counterarguments. They also did little to find solutions to counter them. As a result, the State Department often found itself in opposition to Truman's pro-Zionist policy. At several instances, State Department diplomats personally interacted with and provided support for anti-Zionist Jewish and Arab-American groups working within the US, thus subverting the policies of the American government.

After the adoption of the White Paper, it had become clear to most Zionists that the British would not support an independent Jewish state in Palestine. Hopes now rested on the US. With the destruction of East-European Jewry, American Jewry took the lead in the Zionist movement. The Biltmore conference, which demanded explicitly the establishment of a Jewish state and army, was an expression of this change. However, Reform Jewish anti-Zionists reacted to the Biltmore conference with the setting up of their own body, the AJC. AJC member Elmer Berger led a campaign against Zionism which made him one of the most criticized figures in the Jewish community, but also a popular figure among those opposed to Zionism. He extensively collaborated with the Arab-American anti-Zionists from the IAAA and used his stature as a rabbi to deflect criticism of anti-Semitism from anti-Zionist activists. The Arab League also started an international campaign against Zionism in 1945 and established propaganda bureaus in Jerusalem, London and Washington. Most resources were invested in the US. The reason for this was clear. The Arabs had come to the conclusion that the US was central for their struggle already before the war. With the Zionists now focused on the US and with the US overtaking the British as the leading international power in the Middle East for the foreseeable future, this view was strengthened. However, the rift between the different factions in the Arab League on the one hand and between Musa Alami and Amin al-Husseini on the other often undercut the propaganda campaign in the US.

The impression of the Holocaust, even before its true extent became known after the war, increased sympathy for the Zionist cause enormously in both the Jewish and non-Jewish population. The Arab public diplomacy fight against Zionism in the US was often tainted by accusations of anti-Semitism and of collaboration with the discredited AHC and its leader, Amin al-Husseini. Jewish and anti-fascist organizations considered Amin al-Husseini and his followers to be war criminals and therefore responded fiercely to their activity in the US. The Arab Office would usually deny such claims. However,

it was a fact that the Arab Office was nominally under the authority of Amin al-Husseini. Moreover, AHC members and Mufti loyalists like Emil Ghoury were directly involved in the campaign against UN plans to partition Palestine. Cecil Hourani considered the Mufti to be the worst hindrance to their PR effort. Indeed, through his intrigues, the Arab Office was weakened. On the other hand, his collaboration with the Nazis had compromised the Arab cause in Palestine for a lasting time, until it would pass out of collective memory. The deliberations at the UN proved that the AHC leaders were not ready to change their ways, exploiting anti-Semitism as a tool of anti-Zionist agitation. In his strategy to gain the upper hand in the upcoming vote in the UN in November 1947, former IAAA member, Omar Haliq, proposed to mobilize Catholic hatred of Jews in Latin America although this strategy was to prove unsuccessful. In fact, the opponents of partition never suggested a viable alternative. By 1947, a Jewish state was already in existence in Palestine in all but name. The AHC and Arab League's claims in the West that they would respect the Jewish community in Palestine were disproven by their actions at home. This was repeatedly an issue in the deliberations, as in the AACI. An Arab state in Palestine would have led to the destruction of this state and another massacre of the Jews, just three years after the Holocaust. For such high-minded politicians as Truman, this was no alternative to the partition, whatever its violent consequences eventually were.

## 5 The German-Arab friendship between the First World War and the Six-Day War

Despite being defeated in two World Wars, the history of Germany's Middle Eastern policy and the relevant actors in the period from 1914 until the first decade of the FRG is marked by continuity of concepts and ideology. The idea that there was a natural friendship between the Muslims and the Arabs on the one hand and the German people on the other hand informed it. Even if this German-Arab friendship had its up and downs, it was no mere slogan. Equally, many of the pioneers of the post 1945 pro-Arab movement in Germany could trace their commitment to the Arab cause back to the era of National Socialist Germany, or even Imperial Germany, where they were involved in German Oriental policy as officials or propagandists. They sought to revive German-Arab friendship against Germany's competing Western powers, an idea which had been developed before World War I by Max von Oppenheim. These circles were incensed by the FRG's reconciliation policy with Israel and sought closer ties with the Arab states. An obscure movement from the days of Weimar Germany, National Bolshevism, was also revived in the period of post-War Germany. They believed that Germany, like the Third World, had been colonized by the West, and therefore sought an alliance with them. This ideology came to be known as Liberation Nationalism and inspired many pro-Arab activists and groups. Not only in Germany, but also in Switzerland.

### 5.1 German-Arab friendship after World War II and its origins

The idea of an alliance between Germany and the Islamic world under the banner of an anti-colonialism directed at Western colonial powers – not the Islamic Ottoman Empire – had been developed in the late nineteenth century by the German diplomat and adventurer Max von Oppenheim. Oppenheim identified the numerous Muslim subjects as the Achilles heel of the European empires. In the event of war with the Western colonial powers, France, England and Russia, a Jihad called out by the Ottomans, who had assumed the title of Caliph, would rally the Muslims on the side of Germany. Islamic insurrections, supported by the might of Imperial Germany, would

shatter colonial rule in French North-Africa, Russian Central-Asia, and British India and Afghanistan. This plan was implemented by Germany and its Ottoman ally during the First World War.<sup>743</sup> A Jihad was proclaimed just three days after Enver Pasha had led the Ottoman Empire into War with the Entente: On November 14, 1914, the Ottoman Sheikh ul-Islam, the highest religious authority in the Caliphate, called for a holy war of all Muslims against Russia, France and England.<sup>744</sup> This call to Jihad also marked a rupture in Muslim religious traditions, as it distinguished between friendly and hostile states of the ‘Kafirs’ – the infidels in the view of Islam. The proclamation on the other hand only called for a war against the enemies of Germany and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>745</sup> Thus, the proclamation realized Islam’s anti-imperialist potential, while at the same time subjecting it to the state interests of the equally imperialist German and Ottoman empires. The Germans were intimately involved in the planning of the Jihad: The Intelligence Office for the Orient NfO (Ger. *Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient*) headed by von Oppenheim and staffed with both German academics and Muslims was instrumental in spreading the proclamation and coordinating the Jihad. The German scholar Wolfgang Schwanitz summarized the strategy succinctly as “*waging of an asymmetrical war by incitement to Djihad and by anti-imperial uprisings*”.<sup>746</sup>

Though this Jihad did not become a deciding factor in the war as its German instigators had hoped, the idea of an ‘anti-colonialist’ alliance between Germany and the Islamic world was far from dead, as the renewed alliance between Germany and Islamic leaders during World War II would prove. The role of the Caliph as a rallying point for the Muslims was this time filled by the figure of the Mufti of Jerusalem. The Germans

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<sup>743</sup> Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, “Germany’s Middle East Policy,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 3 (2007): 27.

<sup>744</sup> Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908-1918*, First Edition edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 122.

<sup>745</sup> Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam: A Reader* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Pub, 1996), 55–58.

<sup>746</sup> Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, “Djihad »Made in Germany«: Der Streit Um Den Heiligen Krieg 1914–1915,” *Sozial. Geschichte* 18, no. 2 (2003): 19.

had formed an alliance with the Arab Higher Committee led by the Mufti of Jerusalem, supporting his faction financially and militarily during the Arab Revolt. The Mufti noted that the German support was crucial in continuing the struggle.<sup>747</sup> The German department responsible for the Oriental policies of the Third Reich was the Referat Pol VII. Werner von Hentig who headed the department from 1937 until 1939 when he was succeeded by Fritz Grobba.<sup>748</sup> Both Grobba and von Hentig had already played a role in Germany's Jihad schemes during World War I. Von Hentig undertook an adventurous expedition to Afghanistan to conclude a pact between Germany and its emir.<sup>749</sup> He also took personal care of the Mufti during his exile in Germany and assisted him in his eventual flight from Germany after the Third Reich's defeat.<sup>750</sup> In the aftermath of World War II, von Hentig would also play an important role in the German and to some extent Swiss pro-Arab network, as shall be discussed later.

While the First World War established the alliance between anti-imperialism and Islam at the behest of two empires, the Ottoman and the German, the Second World War added another ideological element to this conglomerate: anti-Semitism. Nazi propaganda material for the Middle East, which was created by both German and Arab employees, “displayed a synthesis of Nazism, Arab nationalism, and fundamentalist Islam. (...)” The propaganda relied on the existing tradition of Islamic anti-Semitism, which was radicalized – as the Mufti and his supporters had done during the previous two decades, as discussed in Chapter One: “*Just as National Socialism represented a radicalization of already existing and long-held anti-Semitic tradition in Europe, so the pro-Arab exiles in Berlin reinforced and radicalized an already existing antipathy to the*

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<sup>747</sup> Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina*, 52, 61–62.

<sup>748</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>749</sup> Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, “Max von Oppenheim Und Der Heilige Krieg. Zwei Denkschriften. Zwei Denkschriften Zur Revolutionierung Islamischer Gebiete 1914 Und 1940,” *Sozial. Geschichte* 19, no. 3 (2004): 32.

<sup>750</sup> Willi Winkler, “Der Führer aus dem Morgenland,” *sueddeutsche.de*, 2010, sec. kultur, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/ns-propaganda-der-fuehrer-aus-dem-morgenland-1.937681#redirectedFromLandingpage>.

*Jews that had been a long-standing component of the traditions of Islam.*<sup>751</sup> National-socialist propaganda in the Middle East was not only anti-Semitic, but also anti-Zionist. Zionism was presented as the creation of British, American and 'Jewish Imperialism' and as the latest manifestation of the Jewish War on Islam. Despite the widespread sympathy for the Axis among the Arabs, National Socialist Germany failed eventually to enlist the official support of any single Arab state, apart from Rashid al-Gaylani's short lived regime in Iraq.<sup>752</sup>

Von Oppenheim, despite being a descendant of Jewish converts to Catholicism, was also involved in Nazi-German Oriental policy. He wrote a document titled '*Memorandum for the Revolutionizing of the Near East Middle 1940*' (Ger. *Denkschrift zur Revolutionierung des Vorderen Orients Mitte 1940*). Unlike in World War I, this time Russia was not targeted as a place for Muslim uprisings – the Soviet Union was after all still an ally of national-socialist Germany. France, which had already been defeated, was also missing. Instead, the Jews were added to the list of enemies of Germany, while Turks and Egyptians were referred to as Germany's secret allies; the sympathy for National-socialist Germany was obviously taken for granted.<sup>753</sup> The memorandum also discussed the situation in the British Mandate of Palestine. Oppenheim's memorandum called for a resumption of the Arab Revolt by fighting against the Jews and the English, which would lead to the instalment of a government led by the Mufti involving all religious groups. Not all Jews however would be allowed to stay in Palestine: "*Of the Jews, only those, who were there before the World War [I], shall be left there.*"<sup>754</sup> For National Socialist Germany, which was bent on the murder of all Jewish populations, even such a plan would have been unacceptably moderate.

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<sup>751</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 261.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid., 261–64.

<sup>753</sup> Schwanitz, "Max von Oppenheim Und Der Heilige Krieg. Zwei Denkschriften. Zwei Denkschriften Zur Revolutionierung Islamischer Gebiete 1914 Und 1940," 41.

<sup>754</sup> Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, "'Der Geist aus der Lampe': Fritz Grobba und Berlins Politik im Nahen und Mittleren Orient," *Comparativ* 14 (2004): 41.



After its defeat in World War II, the Soviet Union to some extent took on the classic German role of a European, but anti-Western power. However, the idea that Germany should partner-up with the Arabs and Muslims to advance its interests remained popular. Both Arabs and Germans continued to evoke a supposedly traditional 'German-Arab friendship' to describe the character of their relations. Lobbyists of Arab-German relations sought to quickly re-establish their excellent ties in the region, having little time to reflect on their involvement in the Third Reich. Reinhard Hüber for instance had been the president of the *Nah- und Mittelostverein* NUMOV (Engl. Association for the Near and Middle East) during the Nazi period. In his writings at the time, he praised the Mufti as an exemplary Arab and warned of the fact that "*international Jews are obviously trying to develop an imperialism of their own*" from their base in Palestine.<sup>755</sup> In 1949, NUMOV reconstituted itself.<sup>756</sup> Hüber again acted as its chair from 1950 until 1958. Hüber believed that Germany's political weakness and economic strength favoured it in its dealings with the Middle East. In his 1954 book with the programmatic title '*Allahu Akbar – Nahost ruft uns!*' (Engl. Middle East is calling us) he summarized this belief as follows: „*Und bald zeigte es sich, dass die deutsche politische Schwäche, nicht imperialistisch sein zu können, in Verbindung mit der Leistungskraft auf wirtschaftlichem Felde uns den Nahostpartnern besonders erwünscht machte, was immer die internationale Konkurrenz dazu sagen mochte.*"<sup>757</sup> Radical German Nationalist extremists also continued to embrace the vision of a German-Islamic alliance. In their grandest plans, they sought the creation of "*a German-Islamic belt from Europe to the South China Sea.*"<sup>758</sup> These Germans proposed an alliance with the 'oppressed nations', the losers of Yalta, among which they counted Germany. This

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<sup>755</sup> "Morality and Business," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 7, no. 1–2 (April 1952): 12.

<sup>756</sup> "A 'Near and Middle East Association' in Hamburg," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 5, no. 1–2 (March 1951): 10.

<sup>757</sup> Reinhard Hüber, *Nahost Ruft Uns!* (Übersee-Verlag, 1954); via Lothar Rathmann, *Stossrichtung Nahost: 1914-1918 ; zur Expansionspolitik des deutschen Imperialismus im 1. Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1963).

<sup>758</sup> Kurt P. Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism since 1945*, vol. 2 (Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 230.

mix of German nationalism and anti-imperialism was translated into widespread sympathy in German post-war radical nationalist circles for anti-colonial heroes like Nasser, Sukarno or Castro.<sup>759</sup> Through an alliance with the Third World, German nationalists sought to punish Germany's former enemies.

The FRG also quickly gained popularity in the Arab world after World War II, especially among the Arab nationalist regimes. There were good practical reasons for this. Germany was considered a partner that could provide the advantages of Western know-how, economic power and influence without seeking to be politically involved in the region. This was especially true after the growing antagonism between Britain and Egypt in the 1950s, when Nasser played on fears that Egypt's participation in a British-dominated military alliance would constitute imperialism.<sup>760</sup> As a result, Nasser sought to distance Egypt from Britain and drew closer to Germany. Then, there was the tradition of German-Arab friendship, which some have dismissed as "*irrational feeling (...), that the two nations were natural allies.*"<sup>761</sup> But there was a deeper idea of Arab friendship with Germany beyond practical considerations. Bassam Tibi referred to this Arab idea as "*Germanophilia*".<sup>762</sup> This Germanophilia was grounded in the common concepts of nationhood in German and Arab nationalism.

This commonality was especially evident in the teachings of Arab nationalism's leading thinker, Sati al-Husri. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Arabs found themselves distributed over a number of states. In the absence of political unity, French

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<sup>759</sup> Ibid.

<sup>760</sup> James P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 70.

<sup>761</sup> Frederick H. Gerlach, "The Tragic Triangle Israel, Divided Germany, and the Arabs: 1956-1965" (Columbia University, 1971), 29; via Michael Wolffsohn and Ulrich Brochhagen, "Hakenkreuze unterm Burnus? Grossbritannien und die deutschen Militärberater in Ägypten 1951-1956," in *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte im 19. und 20.*, ed. Ludger Heid and Joachim Knoll, 1992, 521.

<sup>762</sup> Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, Third ed (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 107.

and English nationalism with its converging concepts of state and nation were of little appeal to Arab nationalism. Husri compared the contemporary situation of the Arabs to Germany's political fragmentation before unification in 1871. He also adopted the German cultural nationalism of Herder, Fichte and Ernst Moritz Arend with its emphasis on language and shared history as the basis of the nation.<sup>763</sup> But, like his German idols, Husri neglected the importance of liberal values. Liberty was not understood as an individual right, but only as a collective one, applying to the freedom of the nation from foreign domination: *Freedom is not an end in itself but a means toward a higher life. (...) The national interests which could sometime require a man to sacrifice his life, must by definition require him, in some case, to sacrifice his freedom. (...) He who does not sacrifice his personal freedom for the sake of his nation's freedom, when the situation requires, may forfeit his own freedom along with the freedom of his people and his country (...). And he who refuses to sublimate (...) his individual self into that of the nation, may in some cases, be compelled to expire (...) in a foreign nation which may one day conquer his fatherland. Because of this, I say unhesitatingly and continuously: patriotism and nationalism above all and before all (...) even above and before freedom.*<sup>764</sup> This anti-liberalism cemented the proximity between the European far-right and Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s and between the far-left and Arab-Palestinian nationalism later. All these movements were united by the emphasis on collective rights, often to the detriment of the individual.

## 5.2 The Opposition to the Luxembourg Agreement

The first crisis in German-Arab relations after the war occurred as a result of the negotiations for a German-Israeli restitution agreement, which started in March 1952. Until their conclusion on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September the same year, they were accompanied by regular protests by Arab governments: Jordan declared that the negotiations endangered the “*century-old good relations between Germany and the Arab east*”, while Syria threatened economic boycott and, together with Lebanon, demanded a

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<sup>763</sup> Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), 55–56, 64.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, 70–71.

share of the restitution for the Arab refugees who had fled Palestine. This demand was joined in August by the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) in Egypt, whose head the Mufti called Adenauer in his usual manner a “*tool of world Jewry*”. Tensions mounted after the conclusion of the negotiations on September 10, 1952. The AHC sent a letter to the Bundestag, warning of a Muslim boycott against Germany.<sup>765</sup>

The terms of the settlement included that Germany was to compensate Israel for the murder and destruction of Jewish lives and properties it had inflicted during the Holocaust. The signing of the agreement vitally strengthened the fledgling Jewish state, but it angered both German far-rightists and Arab nationalists and prompted them to seek cooperation. The aim behind this campaign was to prevent the ratification of the agreement. In summary, the Arab states criticized that the agreement was a breach of German neutrality towards the conflict, which was bound to entail an intolerable strengthening of Israel and thereby disrupt the balance of power in the region. Furthermore, they called for reparations for the Arab refugees of the Arab-Israeli conflict in return, and disputed Israel’s right to be the receiver of compensation for the victims of the Holocaust.

Both Arabs and Germans, whether in support or in opposition to the agreement, repeatedly spoke of “*traditional friendly relations of Germany to the Arab World*”, an allusion to the imperial and national-socialist alliance with large segments of the Arab and Muslim world.<sup>766</sup> Thus, one day after the conclusion of the negotiations, on September 11, 1952, thirty center and right-wing members of the Bundestag called on the government to heed the traditional “*German-Arab friendship*” when they protested the agreement.<sup>767</sup> The fiercest opposition to the Luxembourg agreement within Germany came from pro-Nazi circles and from those engaged in business with the

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<sup>765</sup> Inge Deutschkron, *Israel und die Deutschen: Das besondere Verhältnis* (Köln: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1983), 68–70.

<sup>766</sup> Markus A. Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik: die Geschichte einer Gratwanderung seit 1949* (Campus Verlag, 2002), 100–101.

<sup>767</sup> Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965: Ein neurotisches Verhältnis*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte (München: Oldenbourg, 2004), 219.

Middle East.<sup>768</sup> Reinhard Hüber from NUMOV criticized that the Arab-Islamic voice had not been properly consulted in advance of signing the agreement.<sup>769</sup> These economic fears were not groundless, as the Arab League threatened an economic boycott of Germany. The Arab League subsequently desisted from a comprehensive boycott but moved to create black lists of the companies that traded with Israel. Some German companies therefore pre-emptively informed Arab governments that they intended to follow the boycott.<sup>770</sup>

German diplomats identified Joachim Hertslet as the leading figure behind the campaign. Hertslet had acted as an economic representative for Germany in Mexico during the war and afterwards settled in Eastern Germany, where he supposedly had contacts with Soviet authorities, before leaving for Western Germany. He maintained close contact to government agencies and successfully ran a business specialized in the export of cotton from Egypt. He also worked for the Foreign Office. In 1952, at the behest of the Arab Higher Committee, Hertslet asked the German government to establish a diplomatic mission for the Palestinians in Bonn. The request did not receive an answer. Instead, in a cabinet session on October 21, 1952, Hertslet was called a traitor and it was insinuated that he was not only an agent of the Arab League, but also of the Soviet Union. Subsequently, Hertslet lost his privileged status at the government. As a result of this, he sued senior government functionaries, including Hallstein among others, and the suit was only discontinued in 1967.<sup>771</sup> Hertslet cooperated with

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<sup>768</sup> Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *Deutschland Und Israel 1945-1965: Ein Neurotisches Verhältnis*, vol. Bd. 66, Studien Zur Zeitgeschichte (München: Oldenbourg, 2004), 219

<sup>769</sup> "Morality and Business."

<sup>770</sup> Wageh Atek, "Probleme der ägyptisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1952-1965" 1983, 477–78.

<sup>771</sup> Niels Hansen, *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad Adenauer und David Ben Gurion : ein dokumentierter Bericht*, Forschungen und Quellen zur Zeitgeschichte (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2002); siehe auch Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, "Besprechung von Niels Hansen: Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad

Egyptian and Syrian representatives in Germany as well as pro-Arab activists such as the journalist Augustin Hoppe.<sup>772</sup> Another prominent voice in the campaign was former president of the *Reichsbank*, Hjalmar Schacht. Acquitted in the Nuremberg Trials, Schacht worked as a pro-Nazi publicist, private banker and financial counselor to the Arab states.<sup>773</sup> Later, he would also figure among the founders of the first pro-Arab lobby group in Switzerland.

Adenauer did not yield to the campaign. This was probably also due to his own convictions that the Jews were indeed very powerful. Speaking to the CDU leadership in early September 1952, he warned that a failure would risk the endeavour of acquiring foreign investments to Germany as *“the power of Jewry in the economic sphere is still extraordinarily strong, (...) the reconciliation with Jewry is an absolute necessity from a moral (...) political (...) as well as an economic viewpoint for the Federal Republic.”*<sup>774</sup> The Arab states themselves were convinced that Germany had acted under Jewish and Western pressure, but this seems not to have been the case. On the contrary, the US refused to intervene in the negotiations.<sup>775</sup> In their deliberations with the Arab states, German officials nevertheless used this trope of Jewish power to mute the pressure. For instance, when the Egyptian Consul General spoke to Hallstein on October 14 in the Foreign Office, the latter affirmed that it was impossible not to ratify the agreement, as *“seen through the Jewish lens in America and the US, Israel is much*

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Adenauer und David Ben Gurion : ein dokumentierter Bericht,” *Orient*, 625-631, 44, no. 4 (2003).

<sup>772</sup>Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965: Ein neurotisches Verhältnis*, 219.

<sup>773</sup> Eckart Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Karl Blessing Verlag, 2010), 577–78; Guido Knopp, *Hitlers Manager: [Hjalmar Schacht, Gustav Krupp, Fritz Thyssen, Albert Speer, Alfred Jodl, Wernher von Braun, Ferdinand Porsche]*, Goldmann (München: Goldmann, 2007), 397–98.

<sup>774</sup> Peter Hünseler, *Die Außenpolitischen Beziehungen Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Zu Den Arabischen Staaten von 1949-1980* (P. Lang, 1990), 40–41.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid.

*stronger than one thinks. Especially the Cabinet of Germany cannot confront it.*<sup>776</sup> In another meeting at the German Foreign Office in late October, these talking points were reiterated, convincing the Egyptian Consul General that the agreement had indeed not been grounded in German decisions, as he reported back to his superiors in Cairo.<sup>777</sup> Whether these arguments were part of an intentional strategy to soften Arab pressure or not, they seem to have had this effect.

The Arab states dispatched a delegation to Germany which arrived in Bonn on October 20. Headed by the Lebanese ambassador in France, Ahmed el Daouk, it was prominently staffed, counting former prime ministers of Iraq, Syria and Egypt among its members.<sup>778</sup> Hertslet was chosen as the delegation's advisor, a decision which antagonized the German government.<sup>779</sup> Despite meeting with numerous high-ranking officials, including four meetings with State Secretary of the Foreign Office, Walter Hallstein, and even shortly with Chancellor Adenauer, the delegation failed to convince the German government to abandon its plans to ratify the agreement.<sup>780</sup> As a result, the delegation increasingly turned to addressing the German public directly, holding press conferences and meeting with sympathizers, among others, Hjalmar Schacht.<sup>781</sup> Eventually, the German government urged the delegation on October 29 to leave the country, but upon the protest of Egyptian President, General Naguib, backed down and allowed its members to stay as private persons until they eventually left in mid-November.<sup>782</sup> In the same month, the representative of the Arab League in Germany

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<sup>776</sup> Atek, "Probleme der ägyptisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1952-1965," 475–76.

<sup>777</sup> Ibid., 482.

<sup>778</sup> Deutschkron, *Israel und die Deutschen: Das besondere Verhältnis*, 73.

<sup>779</sup> Hansen, *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad Adenauer und David Ben Gurion : ein dokumentierter Bericht*, 300.

<sup>780</sup> Atek, "Probleme der ägyptisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1952-1965," 479.

<sup>781</sup> Deutschkron, *Israel und die Deutschen: Das besondere Verhältnis*, 74.

<sup>782</sup> Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965: Ein neurotisches Verhältnis*, 227;  
Atek, "Probleme der ägyptisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1952-1965," 479.

and Egyptian and Syrian diplomats also met with Egon-Arthur Schmidt to discuss the idea of a German-Arab Friendship Society, which was eventually established in 1953.<sup>783</sup> Schmidt had worked as a senior official (De. *Hauptstellenleiter*) in Goebbels' propaganda ministry.<sup>784</sup> In January 1953, Wilhelm Voss, the economic counsellor to the Free Officers, also travelled to Germany to meet with pro-Arab and far right sympathizers.<sup>785</sup>

But the Arab states had one last ace up their sleeves by threatening recognition of the GDR. This step greatly impressed the German government because it endangered the FRG's exclusive mandate as the successor state of the German Reich, which underpinned its foreign policy and had motivated its restitution policy in the first place.<sup>786</sup> Still, during the parliamentary consultation, Adenauer declared that "*the protests from the Arab League cannot withhold us from fulfilling this moral obligation.*" CDU and SPD supported the agreement, but the latter also criticized the government for not involving the Arabs at an earlier stage and further, hoped for a normalization of the "*traditional friendship of our people*". FDP speaker and former NSDAP member Walther Hasemann on the other hand harshly criticized the agreement but declared neutrality. The only serious opposition came from the extreme fringes of the Left and the Right, with the right-wing *Deutsche Partei*, the pro-Nazi *Deutsche Reichspartei* and the Communist Party.<sup>787</sup> But when the restitution agreement between Germany and Israel was eventually signed on March 18, 1953, threats by the Arab states did not materialize, as they were divided in their interests.<sup>788</sup> Egypt, the leading power in the

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<sup>783</sup> Deutschkron, *Israel und die Deutschen: Das besondere Verhältnis*, 74.

<sup>784</sup> <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/WRR5TMBXRKFOD6PFPSNNG54U3ZJ5TJZT>

<sup>785</sup> Beate Baldow, "Episode oder Gefahr?" (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, 2013), 121.

<sup>786</sup> Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik*, 102–3.

<sup>787</sup> Mohammad Abediseid, *Die Deutsch-Arabischen Beziehungen* (Seewald, 1976), 79–81.

<sup>788</sup> Weingardt, *Deutsche Israel- und Nahostpolitik*, 102–3.



Arab League, was particularly interested in German investments and know-how. Thus, the pro-German, Hassan Fakoussa, who later worked as the head of the Arab League office in Bonn, already warned the Egyptian Foreign Minister in September 1952 that *“the severance of economic relations with Western Germany would cause us more damage than good.”*<sup>789</sup> Opposition to the Luxembourg agreement was also strong among the Arabists in the Foreign Office.

### 5.3 The German Arabists and the Arabs

How much the Arabist circles of the Third Reich shaped the Middle East policy of the early FRG is contested among historians. Conze et al. speak of the Middle and Near East section in the Foreign Office as *“the sole department with an almost unbroken personnel continuity.”*<sup>790</sup> Berggötz on the other hand relativizes this assessment, emphasizing that only a few former Third Reich diplomats held influential positions.<sup>791</sup> Moreover, some did not fit the profile, like the later ambassador to Egypt Günther Pawelke, who was blocked in his career path because, as a faithful Catholic, he had not joined the NSDAP.<sup>792</sup> Still, when the Foreign Office collected opinions on a possible upgrading of the diplomatic relations with Israel in late 1955, the answers from the diplomatic missions in Arab and Muslim countries were with few exceptions extremely negative.<sup>793</sup> Hermann Voigt, who had succeeded Melchers in 1953 as the head of the Middle East Department, mused that the repercussions would be greater than in the case of the restitution agreement two years earlier, because at that time the Arab

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<sup>789</sup> Atek, “Probleme der ägyptisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1952-1965,” 483.

<sup>790</sup> Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*, 574.

<sup>791</sup> Sven Olaf Berggötz, *Nahostpolitik in Der Ära Adenauer: Möglichkeiten Und Grenzen, 1949-1963*, *Forschungen Und Quellen Zur Zeitgeschichte* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), 106–13.

<sup>792</sup> Hansen, *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad Adenauer und David Ben Gurion : ein dokumentierter Bericht*, 403.

<sup>793</sup> Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965: Ein neurotisches Verhältnis*, 282.

reactions had been muted by their conviction that the agreement was concluded under foreign pressure. The ambassador to Iraq warned that the British were ready to exploit the deteriorating relations with the Arabs. The assessment that the Arabs were serious about their warnings to recognize East Germany as a retaliatory measure and thus undermine the Hallstein doctrine had certainly the biggest effect.<sup>794</sup>

The leading Middle East expert of the German Foreign Office, Wilhelm Melchers, was conspicuously and maybe deliberately bypassed in the negotiations for the restitution agreement.<sup>795</sup> Like many Middle East experts in the Foreign Office, he could look back on an illustrious career in the Third Reich. After having served as the German consul in Haifa, Melchers followed Werner Otto von Hentig in 1939 as the head of the Foreign Office's Oriental Section, also known as Office VII (Ger. Referat Pol. VII) or Orient Office. In this function, he was responsible for among other things producing the extensive German radio propaganda to the Middle and Far East, drawing on the advice of the two most famous Muslim defectors to Germany, the Mufti and Rashid al-Gaylani.<sup>796</sup> After the war, he falsely presented himself and his colleagues from the Foreign Office as central figures behind the plot against Hitler on July 20, 1944, and escaped punishment, becoming instead an HR officer for the Foreign Office in 1949 and then in 1951 the head of the Middle East Bureau (*Referat Pol V Mittlerer und Naher Osten*), a function he exploited to recruit among his former colleagues. As a result, nowhere else in the Foreign Office was the staff continuity as great as in this section.<sup>797</sup>

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<sup>794</sup> Hansen, *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad Adenauer und David Ben Gurion : ein dokumentierter Bericht*, 400–406.

<sup>795</sup> Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*, 574.

<sup>796</sup> Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, 38–39.

<sup>797</sup> Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*, 401–403, 574; Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, 238.

Melchers' predecessor at the Third Reich's Orient Office, Werner Otto Hentig, also continued his career in post-war Germany where he assumed the post of ambassador to Indonesia. Behind the backs of his superiors, Hentig tried to sabotage the negotiations. In June 1952, Hentig met with Alim Idris, a former collaborator from the Foreign Office who now worked as an Arab League representative in Port Said. Alim (or Alimjan) Idris (b. 1887) was a longstanding colleague of Hentig from the days at the Third Reich's Orient Office. He was a Russian Muslim Tatar who had studied in Bukhara and Istanbul. There, Idris had been active as a Young Turk journalist and as an advocate of pan-Turkism. During the war, he had also worked for the German funded *al-Jihad* magazine, before Max von Oppenheim, the driving force behind Imperial Germany's World War I Oriental foreign policy of instigating Jihad against the enemies of Germany, hired him to recruit among Muslim prisoners of war.<sup>798</sup> Idris was an ardent anti-Semite, who found it difficult to cope with the co-existence of pro- and anti-Jewish passages in the Coran.<sup>799</sup> With the ascent of National Socialism, Idris was again employed by the German Foreign Office, where he worked with Hentig and Melchers. In 1941, he wrote a report on Tatars in Russia, advocating an independent Tatar state and the co-optation of Tatar prisoners of war.<sup>800</sup> Idris was an intimate acquaintance of Amin al-Husseini, who chose him to head the school for educating field imams for the Muslim SS units, where he developed the programs in coordination with the German Orientalist, Richard Hartmann.<sup>801</sup> After the war, Idris apparently

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<sup>798</sup> Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Yale University Press, 2014), 147.

<sup>799</sup> Pieter Sjoerd Van Koningsveld, "The Training of Imams by the Third Reich," in *The Study of Religion and the Training of Muslim Clergy in Europe* (Leiden University Press, Leiden, 2008), 338–39.

<sup>800</sup> Camilla Dawletschin-Linder, "Die turko-tatarischen sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen im Zweiten Weltkrieg im Dreiecksverhältnis zwischen deutscher Politik, turanistischen Aspirationen und türkischer Außenpolitik," *Der Islam* 80, no. 1 (2003): 12.

<sup>801</sup> Van Koningsveld, "The Training of Imams by the Third Reich," 338–39.

served as a liaison between the German and Arab opponents of the Luxembourg agreement.

Hentig continued his campaign against the Luxembourg Agreement after its signing on September 10, 1952. Melchers initially was not aware of the meeting between Hentig and Idris but he approved of it tacitly in its aftermath. Two weeks after the signing of the Luxembourg Agreement, Hentig delivered a letter to the Egyptian ambassador in Indonesia. It encouraged the Arab states to continue their protests against the German restitution policy in order to undermine Adenauer, and accused Israel and the “*Jewish controlled press in America*” of slandering the German People by making them responsible for the Nazi’s crimes.<sup>802</sup> While this letter was not discovered by German officials until 1955, Hentig’s superiors did not fail to notice his efforts to derail the Luxembourg Agreement. Thus, the German ambassador to Egypt, Günther Pawelke, warned the Foreign Office that Hentig was conducting a counter diplomacy in the Middle East. In early February 1953, Idris informed Pawelke that Hentig was to meet the Mufti in Cairo. In response, Hallstein ordered Hentig to cancel the meeting and reprimanded him. After leaving the Foreign Office, Hentig became the personal councilor to King Saud of Saudi Arabia.<sup>803</sup> In December 1956, Hentig took part in the inaugural meeting of the *Association Internationale des Amis du Monde Arabe Libre* (Engl. International Association of the Friends of the Free Arab World), which was headed by the Swiss National Socialist, François Genoud. The group will be discussed further below.

The Arab League also established contact with Fritz Grobba, the former ambassador to Iraq from 1932 until 1941. Grobba had been one of the main advocates of an alliance between the Third Reich and Arab nationalism, a sensitive subject due to Italian claims in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since December 1936, Grobba was in touch with the AHC president, Amin al-Husseini. The latter – eventually successfully – asked for

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<sup>802</sup> Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*, 580–81.

<sup>803</sup> Ibid.

German support for the Arab Revolt in Mandatory Palestine.<sup>804</sup> During his Iraqi years, Grobba had been instrumental in inciting hatred against the Jews. A British report concluded that the German embassy in Baghdad worked “*to maintain among the Iraqi people the hatred and dislike for Jews and induce the government to promulgate laws which limited Jewish activities, to nationalize transport and to establish new Arab banks to circumvent financial control by Jews.*”<sup>805</sup> Spending eleven years in Soviet captivity after the war, upon his return he contributed to the study ‘*Die deutsche Ausnutzung der arabischen Eingeborenenbewegung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*’ for the Americans, in which he criticized the Foreign Office for not adequately supporting Arab nationalism during the war.<sup>806</sup> In 1957, the Saudi envoy and former collaborator of the Mufti, Mihdat al-Arab, met with Grobba in Berne to discuss the establishment of a German-Arab Friendship society. Thereafter, he travelled to the Middle East to find sponsors for this undertaking but without success.<sup>807</sup> Although Grobba did not return to the Foreign Office after the war, he was still an accepted member within the circle of German Middle East experts, joining the *Nah- und Mittelostverein* (NUMOV) as the person responsible for Arab affairs.

#### 5.4 The Ideological Roots of the Rapprochement between Arab nationalism and the German Far-right after the War

The interests of the Arab League in Germany were represented by the Egyptian, Hassan Fakoussa. Fakoussa and the Arab League could count on the support of an extensive, far right milieu. In post-war Germany, activists had established several groups that sought to revive the national-revolutionary tradition, the ‘Third Way’ of the National Bolshevists in Germany, which had been suppressed by the National

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<sup>804</sup> Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina*, 53–61.

<sup>805</sup> Ari Alexander, “The Jews of Baghdad and Zionism: 1920-1948 (Unpublished Master Thesis)” (University of Oxford, n.d.), 81.

<sup>806</sup> Schwanitz, “„Der Geist aus der Lampe “,” 141–47.

<sup>807</sup> Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 210–11.

Socialists. These groups opposed both 'Western imperialism' and Bolshevism and instead advocated an international alliance of nationalist movements, which were to maintain a neutralist position towards the Cold War. The German scholar on right-wing extremism, Richard Stöss, has described this position as "Liberation Nationalism" (Ger. *Befreiungsnationalismus*). In fact, this Liberation Nationalism can also be understood as a renaissance of the ideology of pre-World War II National Bolshevism. The National Bolsheviks, a movement of adherents of both extreme German nationalism and socialism born in the inter-war years, were advocating an alliance with the Soviet Union during the years of the Weimar Republic. National Bolshevik ideology was later influential in the NSDAP. National Bolshevism's most important theoretician was Ernst Niekisch. Niekisch had participated in the Bavarian Soviet Republic (Ger. *Münchner Räterepublik*) in a leading role as head of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. After the defeat of the revolution, he was sentenced to two years in prison. Niekisch left the SPD in 1926 and became a member of the Old Social Democratic Party of Germany (Ger. *Alte Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), a nationalistic splinter party. Niekisch was a friend of the Soviet Union. Together with other prominent figures close to National Bolshevism such as Ernst Jünger and Friedrich Hielscher, but also with Marxists like Georg Lukács who knew them both, Niekisch was a member of ARPLAN (Association for the Study of the Russian Planned Economy) and visited the Soviet Union in 1932.<sup>808</sup> He was truly a man of both the left and the right.

Niekisch's ideology was fundamentally anti-Western and anti-Semitic, but its main foe was Christianity or 'Rome', as he called it, which had colonized the German mind. He drew a sharp distinction between a liberal, humanistic and democratic Germany that was part of the West and a militaristic and brutal Germany which belonged to the East. This Germany, the real Germany in his opinion, had historically been a victim of the West and was in a decisive battle with the other Germany, which it could only win by forming an alliance with the Soviet Union. Niekisch believed that "*Germany will regain its freedom only when it revolts against Europe; Germany will be free only if it joins the*

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<sup>808</sup> Kevin Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International*, 1998, 592; see also Michael David-Fox, "Annäherung der Extreme : die UdSSR und die Rechtsintellektuellen vor 1933," *Osteuropa* 59, no. 7/8 (2009): 115–24.

*gathering Russian-Asiatic assault against Europe.*<sup>809</sup> Niekisch himself was probably influenced by Karl Haushofer's geopolitical theories, which were similar to his own.<sup>810</sup> As the leader of the National Bolshevist movement in Germany during the Weimar Republic, Niekisch exerted considerable influence on the left-wing of the NSDAP led by Gregor Strasser. Several prominent NSDAP members were under the spell of National Bolshevism. This group included the young Goebbels, the Strasser brothers, Ernst Röhm, Ernst Jünger,<sup>811</sup> and the Nazi and later Egyptian propagandist, Johann von Leers. In the course of the bloody Röhm-Putsch in 1934, both Gregor Strasser, Ernst Röhm and other left-wing National Socialists were murdered. Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union in 1941 also meant a rejection of National Bolshevist thinking. Despite these setbacks, National Bolshevist thinking would actually survive Hitler. Niekisch himself had opposed National Socialism and Hitler, whom he attacked as "*the last hope of the bourgeois world.*"<sup>812</sup> Therefore, his magazine '*Widerstand*' was banned

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<sup>809</sup> James Joseph Ward, "Between Left and Right - Ernst Niekisch and National Bolshewism in Weimar Germany" (New York University, 1973), 174; cited in Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International*, 591.

<sup>810</sup> Joel Fishman, "The Postwar Career of Nazi Ideologue Johann von Leers, Aka Omar Amin, the "First-Ranking German" in Nasser's Egypt," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 2014, 60–62; Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), chap. 7; Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International*, 591.

<sup>811</sup> Robert Wistrich, *Wer war wer im Dritten Reich: Anhänger, Mitläufer, Gegner aus Politik, Wirtschaft, Militär, Kunst und Wissenschaft - Ein biographisches Handbuch*, trans. Hermann Weiss (München, 1983), 196–97.

<sup>812</sup> Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International*, 590.

and he himself put in jail in 1937, where he remained during the entire war.<sup>813</sup> After World War II, he joined the Communist Party of Germany, the KPD.<sup>814</sup>

To a significant extent, the post-war German far right rejected Hitler's geopolitics, embracing that of Haushofer and of Niekisch instead. The successor ideology to National Bolshevism, Liberation Nationalism, was developed and advocated by several far right thinkers in the 1950s.<sup>815</sup> The German far right activist Karl-Heinz Priester succinctly summarized his own Liberation Nationalist convictions in the following words: *"While Russia is trying to bolshevize Europe, the West is colonizing us. We who have been defamed for years because of our soldierly stand against Bolshevism are being asked to defend a foreign world as dishonored mercenaries! This the front-generation is not in the least inclined to countenance. In order to offer resistance to the oppressors of Europe and Germany the front-generation is holding out its hands to the nationalist forces of all countries to work together to make Europe a third great force in the world. To do this the front-generation in all countries must destroy the barriers of parochial nationalism and of alien interpretations of democratic principles. This will to work and fight and sacrifice for a Nation Europa on a folkish, nationalist basis will not be side-tracked by the Strasbourg efforts."*<sup>816</sup> This was hardly a departure from Niekisch's philosophy. Liberation Nationalism expressed itself in numerous initiatives by the far right for closer collaboration with the Third World. Its adherents were especially well disposed to form an alliance with the Arab and other Third World national movements for several reasons. First, they were sympathetic to the Soviet Union, which became the champion of Arab nationalism and other national movements in the Third World in the 1950s. Second, they perceived Germany as being part of the East, and were therefore strongly anti-Western and anti-imperialistic oriented. Third, anti-Semitism and consequently anti-Christianism were essential pillars of the National

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<sup>813</sup> Ibid., 592–93.

<sup>814</sup> Karlheinz Weissmann, *Armin Mohler: Eine Politische Biographie* (Schnellroda: Edition Antaios, 2011), 60.

<sup>815</sup> Richard Stöss, *Parteien-Handbuch*, 1986th ed. (Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1986), 1384.

<sup>816</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:569.



Bolshevist worldview. They were therefore supportive of all anti-Jewish movements, including Soviet and Arab anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Moreover, as Germans, given the alliances with Turkish and Arab-Islamic players discussed above, the idea of an alliance with Third World national movements certainly was not alien to the National Bolsheviks. It is therefore no coincidence, that at this time, after the war, leading partisans of the movement would take the lead in German organizations in support of the struggle against the Western powers and Israel.

In October 1950, representatives of far-right Liberation Nationalist groups from Western Europe met in Rome. These groups looked favourably on the Arabs, whom they saw as allies against the West.<sup>817</sup> On May 14, 1951, several hundred delegates met in Malmö to found a pan-European post-fascist union, the European Social Movement (Ger. *Europäische Soziale Bewegung*). Some prominent far-right activists, such as Otto Skorzeny or Oswald Mosley, wished to attend but did not receive a visa. At the conference, the delegates embraced a new ideological foundation, distancing themselves from Mussolini and Hitler as their ideological progenitors. The board included Maurice Bardèche, Karl-Heinz Priester, Augusto de Marsanich from the Italian MSI and, as chairman, the Swede Per Engdahl. The ESM maintained contact with more than 40 organizations in Europe, the neo-Nazi network in Argentina and the pro-Arab friendship leagues.<sup>818</sup> During a meeting of the 'Germanic Sections' (Scandinavia, Germany, Austria and Benelux) of the ESM on March 5 and 6, 1955, they decided to improve the group's relationship with the Arab League, in particular its member states Saudi Arabia and Egypt, by establishing European-Arab chambers of commerce and political and cultural study commissions.<sup>819</sup> A leading figure in the rapprochement between the ESM and the Arabs was Karl-Heinz Priester. In 1951, Karl-Heinz Priester had established the *Deutsch-Soziale Bewegung* (Engl. German Social Movement) as a local ESM branch. During the German-Israeli negotiations, Priester allegedly worked as an advisor to the Arab side. He also edited the magazine *Die Europäische Nationale*, which had an enthusiastically pro-Arabic editorial stance. Priester was

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<sup>817</sup> Ibid., 2:1101.

<sup>818</sup> Baldow, "Episode oder Gefahr?," 105–6.

<sup>819</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:231–32. 1967

especially infatuated with Nasser. After the nationalization of the Suez Canal, he congratulated him in his newspaper. These activities led to suspicions that Priester was funded by the Arab states. Indeed, files seized in 1960 by the Frankfurt attorney general reportedly confirmed the close collaboration between Priester's *Deutsch-Soziale Bewegung* and the Egyptian state.<sup>820</sup>

The circle around Otto Strasser also engaged in this kind of National Liberationist politics. Otto, together with his murdered brother Gregor Strasser, was the former leader of the left-wing of the NSDAP. In 1954 the organization Europe-Africa (EURA), which had the goal to push for closer collaboration between both continents, was founded by Harald Stössel, a member of the Association for the German Knowledge of God (Ger. *Bund für Deutsche Gotterkenntnis*), commonly referred to as the Ludendorff-sect. EURA was situated in the milieu of Otto Strasser and enjoyed his support.<sup>821</sup> Strasser himself returned to Germany in 1955. It was the time of significant political changes in the Third World. In April 1955, the representatives of twenty-nine countries from Africa and Asia met in the city of Bandung in Indonesia, laying the ground for what would eventually become a third block next to the Western and Eastern bloc: The Non-Aligned Movement. These events inspired Otto Strasser to put forward a plan of a European-African alliance instead of the emerging African-Asian one in the Non-Aligned Movement. This alliance was to be based foremost on economic considerations: *All of Europe is a factory, the powerhouse of which is Germany. Without adding a guaranteed raw-materials supply and a protected market (...), that 'factory Europe' (...) is doomed. (...) It is therefore of vital importance that the people of Europe and their government recognize those great vital connections and oppose to the Asia-Africa conference of Java a natural Europe-Africa conference which would gain and assure for the people Europe and Africa their economic, political and cultural autonomy (...), independent from Wall Street and Moscow.*<sup>822</sup> It was not the first time

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<sup>820</sup> Ibid., 2:1101–4.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid., 2:232.

<sup>822</sup> *Dr. Otto Strasser, der unbeugsame Kämpfer für ein freies Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Bund für Deutschlands Erneuerung, 1954); cited in Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:230–31.

Otto Strasser had concerned himself with colonial politics. He had dedicated his 1938 book '*Germany and the Colonial Problem*' to the same issue.<sup>823</sup> Otto Strasser dreamed of Germany as an independent power, aligned with the Third World rather than with the Soviet Union and the US. This would also pave the way for German reunification.<sup>824</sup> The Third World and in particular the Middle East held a great fascination for the German far-right.

## 5.5 Nazis in Egypt

After the establishment of the FRG, the Egyptians urged Germany to take a greater role in the economic affairs of the country.<sup>825</sup> This was met with suspicion in Britain. The British press lamented that Germany was exploiting the downturn in Egyptian-British relations caused by the dispute of the British controlled Suez Canal zone for its own political and economic gains.<sup>826</sup> However, the contribution of German emigrants in military matters, propaganda and intelligence would soon prove more controversial than Germany's resurgence as an economic superpower in the Middle East. Recruitment of German military experts had already started under King Farouk in 1948 and continued after the Free Officers Revolution in 1952. Some were recruited from the pool of war prisoners who stayed in Egypt after the Axis's defeat, while others fled there to avoid judiciary prosecutions.<sup>827</sup> Other Arab regimes, like Syria, also sought to

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<sup>823</sup> Otto Strasser, *Deutschland Und Das Kolonial-Problem*, vol. H. 8, Die Dritte Front (Prag: Grunov, 1938).

<sup>824</sup> *Dr. Otto Strasser, der unbeugsame Kämpfer für ein freies Deutschland*; cited in Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:230–31.

<sup>825</sup> "Germans and Arabs," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 6, no. 1–2 (April 1952): 6.

<sup>826</sup> Wolffsohn and Brochhagen, "Hakenkreuze unterm Burnus? Grossbritannien und die deutschen Militärberater in Ägypten 1951-1956," 523.

<sup>827</sup> Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*.

recruit German experts.<sup>828</sup> The recruitment continued under the new regime of the Free Officers Movement, which came to power in Egypt after a coup d'état on July 23, 1952. Initially, the new regime was enthusiastically welcomed by the Arabists in the State Department because it was considered pro-Western and ready to negotiate peace with Israel.<sup>829</sup> Information on the FRG involvement in the recruitment is ambiguous. At first, the recruitment seems to have taken place without the knowledge of German authorities, as was affirmed by General Fahrmbacher, the highest-ranking military official in Egyptian services.<sup>830</sup> The West-German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* BND (Engl. Federal Intelligence Service), headed by the former head of the Third Reich's intelligence service for Eastern Europe, Reinhard Gehlen, clearly played a role in facilitating the transit after receiving an official Egyptian request "*to inject life and expertise into the Egyptian secret service.*"<sup>831</sup> Among other things, Gehlen helped recruit Otto Skorzeny, a famous German commando, who partook in the liberation of Mussolini in 1943: He became an advisor to the Egyptians on guerrilla warfare. How much the CIA knew about Skorzeny, including whether he even supported Gehlen's actions at all, remains contested among historians.<sup>832</sup>

These German emigrants were liable to come into direct conflict with Britain, which was feuding with Egypt over the future of the British military presence in the Canal Zone. During the British-Egyptian negotiations, Egyptian guerrilla operations continued to be launched by Zakaria Muhi al-Din, Nasser's director of military intelligence, although on a lower scale.<sup>833</sup> These guerrilla units were trained by a German, Major

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<sup>828</sup> "Germans among Arabs," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 6, no. 3–4 (August 1952): 22.

<sup>829</sup> See Wilford, *America's Great Game*.

<sup>830</sup> Wolffsohn and Brochhagen, "Hakenkreuze unterm Burnus? Grossbritannien und die deutschen Militärberater in Ägypten 1951-1956," 524–25.

<sup>831</sup> Owen L. Sirrs, *A History of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, A History of the Mukhabarat, 1910–2009* (London: Routledge, 2012), 33.

<sup>832</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>833</sup> Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, 46.

Gerhard-Georg Mertins, who had come to Egypt as a military advisor in 1948.<sup>834</sup> British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was incensed by the support of ex-Nazi personnel for the Egyptian military, warning the German government that their actions might impact negatively on the relations between both countries.<sup>835</sup> But this assessment was about to change. On October 19, 1954, Egyptian Prime Minister Nasser and the British Minister of State signed an agreement, arranging for the evacuation of the British Canal Zone. The rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Egypt was now given higher priority. Confronted with the arrival of Soviet advisors and arms, the ex-Nazis suddenly turned into a Western asset. Thus, neither the Americans nor the British raised objections to the dispatching of German military advisors, when Egypt made such a request to Bonn in early 1956. On the contrary, they encouraged this step.<sup>836</sup>

Egypt attracted not only military experts, but also became a safe haven for far-right and pro-Nazi activists. Otto Ernst Remer, the leader of the *Sozialistische Reichspartei*, a pro-Nazi party in post-war Germany, fled there after the party's banning in 1952.<sup>837</sup> He was one among many: Third Reich finance minister Hjalmar Schacht, who maintained excellent contacts to the Middle East, earning him the nickname of 'Schacht of Persia', also arrived there in September 1952. At a press conference, he suggested to the freshly installed Free Officers that they introduce a labour service based on the National Socialist model.<sup>838</sup> The far-right German press, like the *Deutsche Soldatenzeitung* also started to give Arab nationalists heralding the revival of the German-Arab friendship a platform in its pages since the early 1950s.<sup>839</sup> The German émigrés in Egypt did not seek to isolate themselves from German politics, but on the contrary sought to influence current affairs in their home country and therefore

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<sup>834</sup> Sirrs, *A History of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, A History of the Mukhabarat, 1910–2009*, 33.

<sup>835</sup> Wolffsohn and Brochhagen, "Hakenkreuze unterm Burnus? Grossbritannien und die deutschen Militärberater in Ägypten 1951-1956," 527.

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.*, 534–36.

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid.*, 526.

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid.*, 525–26.

<sup>839</sup> "Germans and Arabs."

maintained numerous contacts to the far-right in Germany, especially to the so called Naumann circle. The secret network, led by prominent former Nazi functionaries, sought to take over the FDP party and turn it into a rallying point for the extreme right, before being blown by the British in early 1953. Besides Schacht and Skorzeny, also Wilhelm Voss, a former economic leader of the Third Reich's armament industries, who now worked as an unofficial advisor to the Free Officers' regime, maintained contact to the Naumann circle. The Naumann circle also seems to have enjoyed some sympathies in the highest ranks of the Egyptian military and, before the revolution, the royal house. In autumn 1952, Colonel Omar met with Werner Naumann and two other leading members of the circle in Germany. Naumann himself considered the support of the German émigrés in the Arab countries as essential for his plans in Europe. But plans put forward by sympathizers to establish a counter government to Bonn in Egypt or the Argentine were opposed by Naumann.<sup>840</sup>

The new regime invested heavily in propaganda. At first, it enjoyed considerable material support from the CIA. Propaganda was just another arm of Egyptian militancy, being closely coordinated between the security apparatus and the Egyptian broadcasting agency. The radio station *Voice of the Arabs*, which was set up in July 1953, inveighed against the Arab rivals of Egypt. It proved a resounding success and was instrumental in establishing Egypt's leadership of Arab nationalism. It was Zakariya Muhi Al-Din, the organizer of the guerrilla raids against the British in the Canal Zone, Fathi al-Dib, and Izzat Soleiman who had come up with the idea of founding a radio station to appeal to the Arabs in the first place, underlining the intertwining of propaganda and violence.<sup>841</sup> Al-Dib would later assume the role of ambassador to Switzerland, where he worked with the Nazi and pro-Arab activist, François Genoud. The Egyptian preoccupation with propaganda also transcended into academia. A Dr. Hassanein Abdel-Kader taught a course on public opinion at the University of Cairo, authoring a book on the issue titled '*Public Opinion, Propaganda, and Freedom of the*

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<sup>840</sup> Baldow, "Episode oder Gefahr?," 120–21.

<sup>841</sup> Sirrs, *A History of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, A History of the Mukhabarat, 1910–2009*, 45; on *Voice of the Arabs*, see also Mohamed Abdel-Kader Hatem, *Information and the Arab Cause* (London, 1974), 165–84.

*Press'*, which was published in 1957.<sup>842</sup> The book's content reflected the Arab consensus on Jewish power encountered earlier in this study, claiming that the Jews controlled the US press and that it was therefore biased in favour of Israel and against the Arabs.<sup>843</sup>

Contrary to the short-sighted expectations of the Arabists at the CIA, Egyptian propaganda quickly turned against its Western sponsors and their allies in the region. Anti-Semitism became central to its message. One of its main purveyors was the Egyptian, Mahmoud Saleh. Saleh had allegedly studied in Paris and Berlin in the 1930s. After World War II, he worked for the anti-Semitic magazine *Weltdienst*, which, supported by the Amt Rosenberg, at its peak in 1944 had reached a circulation of 300'000 copies and was translated into 19 languages. After being interned by the British in Mandatory Palestine, he returned to Egypt in the early 1950s. In 1952, he received funding from the government to establish the Anti-Zionist Association, which was headquartered in a building where government employees were also schooled in anti-Zionism. His task was to organize campaigns against "*Zionists in America and Jewish capitalists*."<sup>844</sup> The Anti-Zionist Association acted as an umbrella organization for anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist groups in the US, France, the UK and especially Germany. Jean Bauverd's *Centre Eurafricain d'Etudes et de Réalisations* (Engl. Euro-African Center for Research and Production) as well as Hans Morgenbrod and Kar Düpow's *Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft* (Engl. German-Arab Society) were among its member organizations.<sup>845</sup>

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<sup>842</sup> حسنين عبد القادر, *الرأى العام والدعاية وحرية الصحافة* (مكتبة الأنجلو المصرية, 1957).

<sup>843</sup> "Propaganda from Cairo - Nasser and the Americans," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 5–6 (1957): 37.

<sup>844</sup> Martin Finkenberger, "Die faschistische Internationale der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 59, no. 6 (2011): 538.

<sup>845</sup> Patrice Chairhoff and Beate Klarsfeld, *Dossier Néo-Nazisme* (Paris: Ramsay, 1977), 449–60; via Jeffrey McKenzie Bale, "The «Black» International: Neo-Fascist

Saleh started to correspond with anti-Semites from all over Europe, seeking to collect material on “*Jewry and Zionism from antiquity until modern times*” and lauding himself vis-à-vis his correspondents for having worked for 20 years “*to hunt down this wicked enemy of humanity*”.<sup>846</sup> In 1955, Saleh sought to re-establish the *Weltdienst* as an international anti-Semitic magazine. On the background of these activities, official and semi-official bodies in Egypt, foremost in the sphere of the Arab League and the Mufti, sought to recruit Nazi propagandists.<sup>847</sup> One foreigner who worked for Egyptian broadcasting was the Swiss fascist, Georges Oltramare.<sup>848</sup> In 1956, Johann von Leers also arrived in Egypt. Fritz Rössler, the former NS district official of Saxony, joined him one year later. After the war, he assumed a cover name and sat in the German Bundestag for the extreme right Deutsche Reichspartei, until his real identity was exposed. After his release from prison in 1957, he left for Egypt, where he joined the community of German Nazis. Like von Leers, he converted to Islam, taking on the name of Achmed Rössler.<sup>849</sup>

Von Leers had spent the years from 1950 until 1955 in the Argentine, where he contributed to the National Socialist German language magazine *Der Weg*.<sup>850</sup> The

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Paramilitary Networks and the «Strategy of Tension»” (Doctoral dissertation. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Service, 1994), 200.

<sup>846</sup> Finkenberger, “Die faschistische Internationale der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten,” 539.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid., 538–40.

<sup>848</sup> “‘Adventurers in Egypt’ - Dr. Johann von Leers,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 1–2 (1957): 4.

<sup>849</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:243; Sven Felix Kellerhoff, “Als Ein NS-Funktionär Bundestagsabgeordneter Wurde: Untergetauchte Nazis,” *DIE WELT*, February 20, 2012, <https://www.welt.de/kultur/history/article13871943/Als-ein-NS-Funktionaer-Bundestagsabgeordneter-wurde.html>; “Fritz Rößler,” *Der Spiegel*, November 6, 1957, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41759806.html>.

<sup>850</sup> Finkenberger, “Die faschistische Internationale der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten,” 535–40.



magazine pursued a pro-Arab line during its existence. It had also interviewed the Mufti Amin al-Husseini twice, in 1953 and 1956. In the latter interview, Al-Husseini complained about the pro-Israeli attitude of the Protestant church in Germany. The interviewer joined Hussein in criticizing this “*new anti-Islamic tendency*” of the church.<sup>851</sup> The magazine served temporarily as the organ of the Fascist International, which had coalesced around the ESM in 1951. This helped von Leers establish contacts to the leading thinkers and activists of the extreme right in Europe. Since 1954, von Leers had considered moving to Egypt from his exile in South America. Several Egyptian officials had tried to recruit the Nazi propagandist into Egyptian services. Mahmoud Saleh, who had been in contact with Johann von Leers for many years, was one of them.<sup>852</sup> According to a CIA source within the German far-right scene, it was however Hassan Fakoussa, the Arab League representative in Bonn since August 1956, who was mainly responsible for von Leers’ move to Cairo.<sup>853</sup> Von Leers had already worked for the Egyptian embassy in Buenos Aires, organizing an anti-Jewish campaign in the country.<sup>854</sup> He was therefore the ideal person to liaise between the Egyptian propaganda infrastructure in Cairo and the far-right in Europe. Since 1955, the Arab League had opened propaganda offices in New York, Bonn and Rio de Janeiro.<sup>855</sup> The CIA saw von Leers’ recruitment as an additional sign of the expansion of the Egyptian propaganda campaign beyond the Middle East. A CIA report from October 1956 noted that “*there are various indicators (...) which lead us to believe that the regional foreign policy objectives of Egypt, including the activities of the Arab League as an organ of expression of Egyptian/Arab policies, may no longer be*

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<sup>851</sup> “DER WEG - Dr. Johann von Leers and the Ex-Mufti,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 10, no. 5–6 (1956): 43.

<sup>852</sup> Finkenberger, “Die faschistische Internationale der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten,” 535–40.

<sup>853</sup> “Report on Arrival of Dr. Hassan A. Fakoussa, Arab League Representative in Bonn” October 26, 1956, CIA Files on Johann von Leers.

<sup>854</sup> Rubin, B. and Schwanitz, W.G., *Nazis Islamists and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, p 217

<sup>855</sup> Sinno, 258

*negative regionally; but may be in process of taking the offensive both regionally and internationally.*” The CIA was especially afraid that the Arab League was seeking to expand its influence in South America: *“The arrival of Johann von Leers (and possibly others of lesser reputation) from South America, each of whom may have accumulated many years of experience and extensive contacts in Latin America which the GOE [Government of Egypt] can use to any possible scheme to take aggressive action in the Western hemisphere (...).”*<sup>856</sup>

In Egypt, von Leers was working with Mahmoud Saleh, translating writings for the Anti-Zionist Association, writings which were then sent to a list of far-right sympathizers. Von Leers also collaborated with the Egyptian Ministry of Information and the Arab League. Tawfik Bakri, an Arab League official and a friend of Fakoussa, acted as von Leers’ sponsor in Egypt.<sup>857</sup> Probably the first work von Leers translated for Saleh was an anti-Zionist work called *‘Frieden im Orient’* (Engl. Peace in the Orient).<sup>858</sup> The book had been authored by Ahmed Moawad, a literary historian and German philologist living in Cairo.<sup>859</sup> Von Leers wrote an anti-Semitic preface to the work. The preface also advocated an alliance between Arabs and Germans, who both had been *“stabbed in the back by Zionism.”*<sup>860</sup> In 1957, von Leers also continued to publish in *Der Weg*, producing his flow of often bizarre anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist articles. In one of them, he accused the Zionists of having infiltrated the Nazi state in order to execute the

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<sup>856</sup> “Activities of the Arab League in the Western Hemisphere” October 8, 1956, CIA Files on Johann von Leers; Finkenberger, “Die faschistische Internationale der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten,” 540.

<sup>857</sup> “Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers” October 24, 1957, CIA Files on Johann von Leers.

<sup>858</sup> Finkenberger, “Die faschistische Internationale der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten,” 540.

<sup>859</sup> *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 1974), 3.

<sup>860</sup> “Cairo Propaganda in German - Directed by Leers,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 14, no. 3 (1960): 47.

Holocaust.<sup>861</sup> He also praised Egypt's military performance in the Suez War and proselytized for "*Islam, the religion of national liberation.*"<sup>862</sup> In another article, he sought to revive the Madagascar plan, proposing that France evacuate the southern part of the island for the resettlement of Israelis.<sup>863</sup> The Swedish journal *Nordisk Kamp* (Engl. Nordic Struggle), the newspaper of the so-called National-Socialist Fighting League, also printed von Leer's articles. The group claimed to be in contact with the Egyptian ministry of information, having received propaganda material from them.<sup>864</sup>

Although von Leers proved useful to the Egyptians through his knowledge and his contacts, whom he sought to convince of his pro-Arab line, he did not have access to the highest echelons of power and wielded little influence.<sup>865</sup> One year later, in 1958, his stature in the Egyptian regime seems to have significantly improved. He frequently visited several leading personalities, including Mohammed Abdul Khalek Hassouna, secretary general of the Arab League, the Mufti Amin al-Husseini, and the German-friendly president of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Council, Anwar al-Sadat, who later became president of Egypt.<sup>866</sup> The Arab League remunerated him with a generous monthly wage.<sup>867</sup> Von Leers not only maintained contact with Germany's Nazi scene, but also to its nascent Muslim community. He established contacts with the German

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<sup>861</sup> "DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN-ZEITUNG," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 5–6 (1957): 42.

<sup>862</sup> "The Voice of Cairo in Der Weg," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 1–2 (1957): 10.

<sup>863</sup> "DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN-ZEITUNG."

<sup>864</sup> "International Fascists Are the Friends of Nasser," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 3–4 (1957): 26.

<sup>865</sup> "Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers."

<sup>866</sup> "Propaganda Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers against Israel and West Germany" March 12, 1959, CIA Files on Johann von Leers.

<sup>867</sup> Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, "Book Review: Through the Eyes of the Mufti. The Essays of Haj Amin," *SPME*, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://spme.org/book-reviews/book-review-through-the-eyes-of-the-mufti-the-essays-of-haj-amin/>.

Muslim League (Ger. *Deutsche Muslim-Liga*), which had been founded in 1952 in Hamburg and “intends through this society to start an anti-Semitic movement in the [German] Federal Republic.”<sup>868</sup> With Karl-Heinz Priester, a leader of the European Social Movement, ESB, he published a book with the title ‘*The Truth about the Palestine Question*’, which he penned together with al-Husseini and his secretary.<sup>869</sup>

It is worthwhile to take a look at Johann von Leers’ worldview during his Cairo years. After arriving in Egypt, von Leers converted to Islam, adopting the name of Omar Amin von Leers, and became increasingly more religious.<sup>870</sup> The conversion to Islam was not owed to mere opportunism. Von Leers had long been an Islamophile, a worldview which was not altogether rare among National Socialists. Already in 1942, von Leers had argued in his essay ‘Judaism and Islam as Opposites’ that both religions represented worldviews which were mutually exclusive and that Islam and National Socialism were bound by their shared hatred of Jews.<sup>871</sup> Von Leers’ new name, Omar Amin, was informed both by his friendship to the Mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husseini and his deep-rooted anti-Semitism. He now envisioned the formation of a pan-Islamic block against both East and West.<sup>872</sup> To the dismay of some of his far-right German colleagues, his pro-communist stance became even more pronounced in his Cairo years. He pleaded with the German far-right to negotiate with the Soviet Union to restore the German areas lost to Poland.<sup>873</sup> He also advocated the conquest of Germany by the Soviets, thus permitting the installation of the Fourth Reich.<sup>874</sup> Moreover, he defended far-right activists who took money from the GDR. Communism,

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<sup>868</sup> Johnson, I., *A Mosque in Munich*, p 113

<sup>869</sup> Rubin, B. and Schwanitz, W.G., *Nazis Islamists and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, p 218

<sup>870</sup> “Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers.”

<sup>871</sup> Herf, J., *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p 260

<sup>872</sup> “Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers.”

<sup>873</sup> Ibid.

<sup>874</sup> “Propaganda Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers against Israel and West Germany.”

he argued, presented no danger to the Near East, “*because the Mohammedan religion protects the Arabs against a foreign ideology.*”<sup>875</sup>

This was no isolated sentiment, but congruent with von Leers’ larger *Weltanschauung*. Due to its anti-Semitic tendencies, its anti-Zionist and pro-Arab policy, the Soviet Union became a viable partner for many on the far-right in the 1950s. In 1957, when the anti-Semitic publisher Karl-Heinz Heubaum fled to Eastern Germany in order to avoid a prison term, Johann von Leers, commented on the incident: “*The flight of Heubaum to East Germany is somehow symptomatic. The brutal Jewish tyranny in Western Germany, backed by the American government, forces more and more patriots either to emigrate, mostly to Islamic countries, or to search refuge in the Communist part of Germany. Heubaum is in no way a Communist or a fellow traveler, but only anti-Jew. Therefore he has been condemned and – to avoid jail in Western Germany, where the treatment meted out is horrible – he went East. The monkey-love of the USA government for the Jews isolates the Americans both in Germany and in the Near East. On the other hand, the Russians are clever enough to appeal to the sound anti-Jewish feeling of the peoples.*”<sup>876</sup> Sympathy and cooperation between the Soviet Union and the far-right was not a phenomenon confined to Europe but is also documented in the US.<sup>877</sup> Interestingly, this was a configuration which had already existed during the years of the Weimar Republic in Germany, as was discussed above with regard to National Bolshevism.

It is not difficult to see these views only as the latest expressions of his National Bolshevist convictions. They are also compatible with the Liberation Nationalism popular among the far-right in his native Germany. It seems that von Leers was convinced in his later years that his world-view was prevailing. In 1958, he wrote an enthusiastic letter to a fellow fascist, the American, H. Keith Thompson: “*One thing is clear – more and more Germans join the great Arab revolution against beastly imperialism. In Algeria, half a company of German soldiers (...) have gone on the side*

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<sup>875</sup> “Activities of Dr. Johann von Leers.”

<sup>876</sup> Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International*, 440.

<sup>877</sup> *Ibid.*, 441–42.

*of the Algerians and have embraced Islam. That is good! To hell with Christianity, for in Christianity's name Germany has been sold to our oppressors! Our place as an oppressed nation under the execrable Western colonialist Bonn government must be on the side of the Arab nationalist revolt against the West.*"<sup>878</sup> The Nasser regime did not simply co-opt the Nazis to further its foreign policy goals but was itself not free from anti-Semitism. Thus, Nasser would deny the Holocaust and contend that *"Europe was in the hands of three hundred Zionists"*.<sup>879</sup> This love affair between the German far-right and Nasser would persist into the next decade.

## 5.6 The Impact of the Suez Crisis on far-right pro-Arabism

During the Suez Crisis of 1956, the mainstream press in Germany was sharply critical of the actions of Britain and France. They were however more understanding of Israel. The consensus was that the West, especially the US, had not done enough to protect the security of Israel.<sup>880</sup> The overwhelming majority of the German public also opposed the war. According to polls, only nine percent expressed support for Britain and France, the lowest number in any Western country.<sup>881</sup> NUMOV chief Reinhard Hüber seized the opportunity to criticize the FRG foreign policy as being too focused on Israel and neglecting the wider Middle East in an article in the *Übersee Rundschau*, a journal of foreign trade associations.<sup>882</sup> Dislike for France and Britain and sympathy for Egypt was even more pronounced among the nationalist-minded elements of Germany.

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<sup>878</sup> Ibid., 382–83.

<sup>879</sup> Rubin, B. and Schwanitz, W.G., *Nazis Islamists and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, p 218

<sup>880</sup> "Britain, France, Israel and Egypt - German Press Reaction to Recent Events," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 10, no. 5–6 (1956): 36.

<sup>881</sup> Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany: The Post-Nazi Epoch Since 1945* (Transaction Publishers, 1997), 173.

<sup>882</sup> "Concern for 'Arab-Islamic Friendship,'" *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 10, no. 5–6 (1956): 36.

Already before the Suez Crisis, the nationalist and far-right press had been staunchly pro-Arab. Eberhard Fritsch, the editor of the German-speaking Nazi newspaper *Der Weg* criticized the German government for risking the friendship with the Arabs for “a few screaming Jews”.<sup>883</sup> The July 1956 issue of *Nation Europe* was dedicated to the Arab world, featuring articles by three Egyptian writers. One of them was written by the anti-Semitic agitator, Mahmoud Saleh, who declared that Europe was controlled by the Jews, “the supranational and international race (...), whose God, according to its own greatest son Karl Marx, is the gold.”<sup>884</sup> Now, there was a wave of enthusiasm for Nasser and Arab nationalism in the far-right. In its April 1957 issue, a *Nation Europe* article called on the Germans to support the Arabs, who had been loyal friends of Germany during the past two World Wars. Those who opposed him were accused of facilitating Communist penetration of the Middle East. Interestingly, there was also a small pro-Israeli article in the issue, which asked why the far-right press was so inimical to Israel despite the fact that it was a Western bastion of freedom and a bulwark against Communism.<sup>885</sup> It remains an interesting question to this day. Anti-Semitism and anti-Westernism seem to have played a more important role in post-WW II far-right ideology than anti-Communism.

The neutralist, far-right party *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, DG (Engl. German community) of August Haussleiter shared the pro-Arab enthusiasm. The DG adhered to the Liberation Nationalist consensus among the post-war German far-right.<sup>886</sup> After the Suez War, the DG called on the FRG to stop paying restitution to Israel. The step was praised by the Mufti, whose congratulatory message was printed in the DG's party newspaper. In the eyes of DG chairman Haussleiter, the Arabs and the Germans were united by having experienced a similar refugee catastrophe: “Hundreds of thousands of Arabs have been expelled from their homes just as have been millions of Germans

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<sup>883</sup> “The Fascist International - A Survey of Some of Its Journals,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 10, no. 1–2 (1956): 10.

<sup>884</sup> “‘Nation Europa’ - Special Issue on Arab Affairs,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 10, no. 3–4 (1956): 24.

<sup>885</sup> “International Fascists Are the Friends of Nasser.”

<sup>886</sup> Stöss, *Parteien-Handbuch*, 1385.

(...). *This fact establishes a profound community of destiny.*<sup>887</sup> The parallel between the Arab refugees of Palestine and the German refugees of Eastern Europe would become a common theme among far-right pro-Arabs. The Egyptian embassy was also not afraid to maintain contact with the far-right. Thus, the Egyptian ambassador wrote a letter to the German Reich Party, thanking them for their support for his home country. The letter was published in the party's press organ, *Reichsruf*, in February 1957.<sup>888</sup>

The enthusiasm for Nasser soon translated into the establishment of several pro-Arab organizations by far-right activists. A central figure of the pro-Arab German scene was DG member, Erwin Schönborn. Schönborn, an anti-Semitic activist and a promoter of Third Reich movies, founded the *Deutsch-Arabische Gemeinschaft*, DArG (Engl. German-Arab Community) on November 9, 1956 as a branch of the DG.<sup>889</sup> The far-right activist Horst Morgenbrod also established the *Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft* (Engl. German-Arab Society) in November 1956. Karl Düpow, a member of Otto Strasser's *Deutsch-Soziale Union* (Engl. German Social Union) and an advocate of Liberation Nationalism, later joined.<sup>890</sup> The wave of pro-Arab sympathies among the far-right, which followed the Suez Crisis, also extended to Switzerland. On December 11, 1956, the *Association Internationale des Amis du Monde Arabe Libre* (Engl. International Association of the Friends of the Free Arab World) was established in the Swiss capital of Berne. The inaugural meeting assembled National Socialist sympathizers and former officials of the Third Reich: Besides Werner Von Hentig, the list of attendants included German treasury minister Hjalmar Schacht, German senior civil servant (Ger. *Regierungsrat*) Hans Rechenberg, and Francois Genoud. The Swiss police ascribed a leading role in the association to a certain Haidar Bamatte, a member of the Afghan Delegation in Paris, and his son Nadjm oud-Dine Bamatte (also written as Nadjnouddin, Najmuddin, Najmeddim), who was allegedly working for the UN in

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<sup>887</sup> "International Fascists Are the Friends of Nasser."

<sup>888</sup> "GERMANS AND THE MIDDLE EAST - Sympathy for Israel," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 1–2 (1957): 4.

<sup>889</sup> Stöss, *Parteien-Handbuch*, 1385.

<sup>890</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:235.



Geneva.<sup>891</sup> Despite its prominent composition, the association never stood out for its activism: Apart from publishing the magazine *Les Nouvelles du Monde Arabe* and map of the Near East, no public activities have been recorded. The Swiss authorities only noted that the map ignored the presence of Israel and redrew the Turkish-Syrian border, apportioning the province of Alexandretta to Syria. In the name of the group, Genoud sent several letters to Arab officials, including to Nasser.<sup>892</sup>

Another Swiss, the National Socialist Jean Bauverd, created the *Centre Eurafricain d'Etudes et de Réalisations* (Engl. Euro-African Center for Research and Production) in the Moroccan city of Tangier in 1956. Its goal was to propagate the message of Liberation Nationalism and counter French influence in Africa.<sup>893</sup> Genoud and Bauverd had been friends since their youth in Lausanne, when both were active in the National Front, the pendant of the fascist movement in Switzerland. In 1936, they set out for a two-year trip to the Orient, where they met with the Mufti of Jerusalem, Mohammed Amin al-Husseini. The encounter was to have a lasting influence on the *Weltanschauung* of both men. During the war, Bauverd worked for the Germans, setting up Radio Monte Carlo in 1943, which broadcasted German propaganda to the Middle East. After the German defeat, he escaped imprisonment by fleeing to Syria, where he became active at Radio Damascus. He also distributed synchronized copies of Nazi propaganda movies like *'Jud Süß'*. After 1949 he was responsible for the establishment of Islamic press offices in Rome, Paris and Buenos Aires. Bauverd also introduced Genoud in Tanger to Ben Bella, the founder of the Algerian National Liberation Front, FLN (Fr. *Front de Libération Nationale*).<sup>894</sup> Genoud would later

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<sup>891</sup> "Memo on 'Association Internationale des Amis du Monde Arabe Libre'" May 31, 1957, CHBAR# E4320B#1968/195#239.

<sup>892</sup> "Fiche François Genoud (1934-1989)" n.d., CH-BAR#E4320-01C#1996/203#176; Pierre Pean, *L'Extremiste François Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos* (Paris, 1996), 225–28.

<sup>893</sup> Karl Laske, *Ein Leben zwischen Hitler und Carlos: François Genoud* (Zürich, 1996), 98.

<sup>894</sup> Willi Winkler, *Der Schattenmann: Von Goebbels Zu Carlos: Das Mysteriöse Leben Des François Genoud*, 1. Aufl (Berlin, 2011), 57.

become an important base of support for the FLN through his banking operations. The German Branch of Bauverd's center was headed by Karl Düpow, who also published the *Afrika und Orient Information* (AFROR), which regularly featured articles by far-right liberation nationalists and pro-Arabs, such as the well-known Johann von Leers or Fritz Rössler.<sup>895</sup>

Horst Morgenbrod and Karl Düpow of the *Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft* invited twenty-five pro-Arab groups to meet at a German-Arab congress in Weinheim in October 1957. However, only ten groups attended. An observer from the Egyptian embassy, probably the Arab League representative Hassan Fakoussa, a member of a certain Secretariat of Arab Students as well as Arab and Algerian sympathizers were present as well. As a result of the congress, a German-Arab Council was founded to coordinate the activities of the various member organizations.<sup>896</sup> However, the far-right love affair with the Arabs was not always repaid with the same fervor by the Arabs. Already in September 1957, Hassan Fakoussa had distanced himself from these organizations in the pages of the *Arabische Korrespondenz*: "*Neither official Arab nor official German quarters were concerned in the launching of these societies, but only purely private circles which sometimes pretended to have the support of the Bonn Delegation of the Arab League it is categorically stated that neither the Arab League nor the Arabische Korrespondenz has anything to do with those circles.*"<sup>897</sup> This was probably a tactical move, as Fakoussa continued to frequent "*those circles*". Still, hopes for closer collaboration between the far-right pro-Arab groups and the Arab League did apparently not work out as planned, prompting Morgenbrod to conclude bitterly just two months after the pro-Arab congress and the establishment of the German-Arab Council: "*The organizations which united in the Council are disappointed that their good intention to work together for German-Arab friendship has met with passivity in the Arab embassies accredited to Bonn.*"

The only organization which experienced anything resembling a lasting existence was Erwin Schönborn's *Deutsch-Arabische Gemeinschaft* DArG (Engl. German-Arab

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<sup>895</sup> Ibid., 234–35.

<sup>896</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:235.

<sup>897</sup> "Arabs and Bonn - Unloved?," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 11, no. 5–6 (1957): 44.

Community). When the DG distanced itself from its former Liberation Nationalist position in 1957, Schönborn quit the party and moved into the circles of Otto Strasser. In 1961, Schönborn formed his own National Bolshevist party, the *Freie Sozialistische Partei* (Engl. Free Socialist Party).<sup>898</sup> The DArG remained moderately active until the 1960s, sporadically publishing manifestoes and organizing events.<sup>899</sup> In its events, it often worked with the growing Arab student community in Germany. On January 11, 1962, the DArG held an event in Mainz, its home city, about 'Fascism and Zionism'. The invitation letter showed obvious signs of Liberation Nationalist conviction, stating that both fascism and Zionism were the "*dangerous side products*" of "*Western Colonialism and Eastern Soviet Imperialism*". Moreover, it warned that by "*excessiveness of Zionism anti-Jewish feeling will be provoked*".<sup>900</sup> As an anti-Semitic, far-right activist, Schönborn was certainly not concerned about either fascism or anti-Semitism. But he was certainly aware that the accusation that Zionism was essentially Fascism and that it was fostering anti-Semitism was a powerful rhetorical trick, especially in post-war Germany. It allowed anti-Semites to attack Jews while seemingly distancing themselves from fascism and anti-Semitism. Besides Erwin Schönborn, a certain Adnan Abu-Ghanimeh, the Arab spokesman of the DArG and a student in Germany, as well as Hans Schulz, a board member of the DArG and a representative of a far-right youth group, spoke at the event. After receiving information on the event from Karl Marx, the editor of the *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, the German Ministry of Interior considered banning the event based on its anti-Semitic message. One official argued that harsh judgements against the anti-Semitic perpetrators during a wave of anti-Semitic acts in 1961 provided legal grounds for such an approach. Schönborn had already been convicted several times in the past.<sup>901</sup> Still, the event eventually proceeded as planned.

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<sup>898</sup> Stöss, *Parteien-Handbuch*, 1383–85.

<sup>899</sup> Ibid., 1393.

<sup>900</sup> Deutsch-Arabische Gemeinschaft, "Einladung zur Veranstaltung 'Faschismus und Zionismus'" February 4, 1962, BArch B136/4371.

<sup>901</sup> Karl Marx, "To Ministerialdirektor Dr. Reinhold Mercker," n.d., BArch B136/4371; Dr. Kulser, "Betreffend Veranstaltung der Deutsch-Arabischen Gemeinschaft am 11.

However, it was attended by two agents of the German domestic intelligence agency, the *Verfassungsschutz*, who left us with reports of it, which clearly bear evidence of its anti-Semitic content. It started with a short lecture by Hans Schulz, the youth representative, who claimed that General Franco was a converted Jew. Abu-Ghanimeh followed, alleging that the Zionists had gained possession of Palestine through their control of England. Unlike in Germany where only a small clique had committed war crimes in secret, the Zionists did so openly. Schönborn was the last to speak, alleging that *“Churchill, Roosevelt and their Zionist counsellors did everything to push Germany to war.”*<sup>902</sup> Moreover, he accused the Jews of adhering to *“master race theory”* (Ger. *Herrenrassentheorie*) by calling themselves the chosen people.<sup>903</sup> The event was attended by about 40 persons. About half of them were Arab students, while the German attendants included members of the left-wing Socialist University Association SHB (Ger. *Sozialistischer Hochschulbund*). After the event, there was a lively debate. The left-wing German students criticized the speakers as anti-Semites, while the Arab students supported the speakers, declaring that Israel was an illegitimate state. The National Bolshevist activist, Karl Düpow, who frequented the same circles as Schönborn and had shared the ideology of Liberation Nationalism, disagreed with the far-right consensus against Israel. He stated that the conqueror of a country had the right to this country. The Arabs had also gained the rights to their countries through conquest. In this sense, he proclaimed, he was a fascist. The Arabs should therefore come to terms with the existence of Israel. One of the *Verfassungsschutz* agents attending the event observed that anti-Zionism had become an outlet for anti-Semitic sentiment: *“Die Funktionäre des DArg und ihre Anhänger erklären zwar, dass sie jeden anti-Semitismus nachdrücklich ablehnen. Man wird aber das Gefühl nicht los, dass sie, da man mit anti-Semitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland sofort mit der öffentlichen Meinung und mit den Strafgesetzen in Konflikt gerät, ihre antisemitischen unterschwelligen Gefühle subversiv in Antisionismus [sic]*

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Februar 1962 in Mainz ‘Faschismus und Zionismus’” February 8, 1962, BArch B136/4371.

<sup>902</sup> *Verfassungsschutz*, “Bericht zur Veranstaltung der deutsch-arabischen Gesellschaft zu ‘Faschismus und Zionismus’” February 11, 1962, BArch B136/4371.

<sup>903</sup> *Ibid.*

*abreagieren*.<sup>904</sup> He also worried that the Arab students in Germany were drawn to the extremist movements of the far-right and far-left and avoided the established parties.<sup>905</sup> Arab students in Germany continued to work with the far-right in order to advance their agenda. In 1965, Erwin Schönborn spoke at another university meeting on 'The Middle Eastern Crisis: Judaism and Zionism', which was organized by the student branch of the NPD. An Egyptian speaker by the name of Khoury blasted the "*the murderous horde of Zionists who, forming an international conspiracy, had long since forfeited the trust of peace-loving Arabs...One cannot co-exist with them.*"<sup>906</sup>

The Arab diplomats in Bonn maintained visible relations with the German far-right. Thus, advertisements by the UAR embassy were published in the *Deutsche National-Zeitung*, flanking other advertisements of the far-right and pro-Nazi press.<sup>907</sup> Hassan Fakoussa, the Arab-League representative in Bonn, pursued a policy of co-opting the German far-right. Fakoussa regularly wrote for such far-right newspapers as Gerhard Frey's *Deutsche National-Zeitung* or *Das Deutsche Wort*. He used the pages of the latter to threaten the German government in 1963 that the Arab states would recognize the GDR if the FDR improved its relations with Israel.<sup>908</sup> In 1964, Fakoussa published the booklet '*Israel verfolgt deutsche Wissenschaftler*' (Engl. Israel persecutes German Scientists). The booklet extensively cited from the far-right press, in particular Gerhard Frey's *Deutsche National-Zeitung*, the successor publication of the *Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung*, and from the *Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung*, the party organ of the

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<sup>904</sup> Ibid.

<sup>905</sup> Ibid.

<sup>906</sup> "WRESTLING WITH THE RIGHT WING - Arab Propaganda," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (1965): 36.

<sup>907</sup> "Appeals To Rampant Nationalism - Deutsche National Zeitung," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 18, no. 3 (1964): 51.

<sup>908</sup> "Arab League Propaganda in Bonn," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 18, no. 2 (1964): 19.

NPD.<sup>909</sup> In 1963, Gerhard Frey travelled to the Middle East, interviewing both the Iraqi and the Syrian president on behalf of his newspaper, which he advertised as being “*very sympathetic to the Arab countries*”.<sup>910</sup> On his trip to Egypt, he further managed to interview Nasser confidant, Mohamed Heikal, the editor of the semiofficial *Al Ahram* newspaper. He also met with Johannes von Leers, now a sickly old man, and Hans Eisele, a convicted German war criminal and former KZ physician, who escaped a second trial through his flight to Egypt in 1958.<sup>911</sup> The *Deutsche Nationalzeitung* acted as Nasser’s unofficial German organ. In its May 1, 1964 issue, he granted an interview to the far-right newspaper, proclaiming that he was not seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Israel and expecting its destruction “*within a generation – if Allah willed it so.*” Nasser lamented German restitution money going to Israel. When Frey remarked that this was because of the Holocaust, Nasser denied its historicity: “*But the lie of the six million murdered Jews is not taken seriously by anybody.*”<sup>912</sup> Frey consented. He may well have felt slightly embarrassed that this Egyptian statesman had overtaken him in his extremism. In the course of the conversation, Frey furthermore drew parallels between the German expellees and conveyed the wish that Nasser would support Germany in regaining their lost territories in the East. Nasser replied that the Arabs were friends of the Germans and had been sympathetic to Nazi Germany during World War II.<sup>913</sup> The pro-Arab line of the *Deutsche National-Zeitung* remained consistent. It featured interviews with the acting Secretary of the Arab

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<sup>909</sup> “Arab Propaganda in Bonn - ‘Israel Persecuting German Scientists,’” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 19, no. 2 (1965): 23.

<sup>910</sup> “Germans among Arabs - Reports from Cairo,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 17, no. 3 (1963): 35.

<sup>911</sup> “Germans among Arabs - REPORTS FROM CAIRO”; “Robert Fisk: Butcher of Buchenwald in an Egyptian Paradise,” *The Independent*, August 7, 2010, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-butcher-of-buchenwald-in-an-egyptian-paradise-2045930.html>.

<sup>912</sup> “Peace? Most Certainly Not - Nasser Talks to Militant German Nationalist,” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 18, no. 3 (1964): 34.

<sup>913</sup> *Ibid.*

League in its March 12, 1965 issue and ran such headlines as “*Justice for Nasser!*”.<sup>914</sup> The language of the journal thereby often imitated that of Nazi propaganda during the Third Reich by using expressions like ‘*Weltjudentum*’ (Engl. World Jewry). Thus, the headline of the February 19, 1965 issue read: “*Does World Jewry declare boycott on Bonn? The background of the German-Israeli conflict.*” The close relations between the far-right and the Arab states in Germany in the 1950s and the 1960s is however a chapter largely forgotten today.

## 5.7 Liberation-Nationalism in Switzerland: Hans Fleig and Ahmed Huber

Liberation Nationalism also had its adherents in Switzerland. Although it never grew into a movement like in Germany, several individuals can be considered to have belonged to this school of thought. The earliest pro-Arab activists in Switzerland took positions which cannot easily be placed in stereotypical conceptions of Left and Right. Worth mentioning are François Genoud and the journalists, Ahmed Huber and Hans Fleig. While Genoud’s life and activities have been amply studied in several books and articles, Ahmed Huber and certainly Hans Fleig are less known. Hans Fleig was a prolific Swiss journalist in the 1950s and 1960s, who sought to raise sympathy for Nasser’s pan-Arabism in Switzerland. Hans Fleig was born in 1916 in Basel, studying law and literature in Basel, Freiburg and London. There are several rumors about his political activities during his study years. As a student in Basel, he allegedly frequented the circles of the *Frontisten*, Swiss National Socialist and fascist groups, and anonymously wrote for one of their newspapers. Upon the exposure of his identity, he was expelled from his student association<sup>915</sup> During World War II, Hans Fleig came under the influence of National Bolshevism. In 1944, Fleig attended a public lecture by a fellow student named Armin Mohler, who was soon to become his close friend. Mohler, after having temporarily held communist sympathies, volunteered for the SS in 1942. His lecture bore the enigmatic title ‘The German National Bolshevism’ and

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<sup>914</sup> “Deutsche National-Zeitung - ‘Language of Tomorrow’s Potential Murderers,’” *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 19, no. 2 (1965): 19.

<sup>915</sup> “Fiche Hans Fleig (1949-1984)” n.d., 1, CHBAR (018) 960.0/121; “Leserbrief von Frank Dukas,” *Luzerner Neueste Nachrichten*, November 7, 1964.

discussed the ideas of Ernst Jünger and Ernst Niekisch. Especially the latter's ideas had a considerable influence on Fleig's thought. Both Fleig and his friend, Mohler, placed hope in Niekisch's collaboration with the KPD/SED after the war, which would help, as they hoped, to turn Germany into a power of international status again. Hans Fleig adapted the same hostile attitude towards Christianity, baptizing his first daughter in a pagan rite, as he wrote to his friend, Mohler.<sup>916</sup>

After travelling to Germany and witnessing the last days of the war, an experience which greatly satisfied him, Fleig returned to Basel to form a private group called *Basel Trias* together with Mohler and the journalist and photographer, Erhard Hürsch. Their goal was to support leading right-wing intellectuals in Germany, including Ernst Jünger, his brother Friedrich Georg Jünger, Carl Schmitt and Gottfried Benn. The funds for this undertaking were provided by the chemist, Albert Hofmann, the discoverer of LSD, who was a strong admirer of Jünger. Also associated with the circle were the Indologist Jakob Wilhelm Hauer and another National Bolshevik thinker, Friedrich Hilscher.<sup>917</sup> From 1948 to 1961, Hans Fleig worked as journalist for the Swiss daily newspaper *Die Tat*, first as its correspondent from London, and then as its foreign affairs editor. In this function, he provided a platform for his colleagues from the *Basel Trias*. Mohler worked as the French correspondent for *Die Tat*. Ernst Jünger also ran a few articles and the former German ambassador to the Soviet Union, Rudolf Nadolny, wrote a front article heavily criticizing the post-war policy of the Allies.<sup>918</sup> Each time, Fleig would then formally denounce the ideas of his friends in public, while endorsing them in secret. This brought him into conflict with Armin Mohler, who criticized his moderate behavior in public, while his inner convictions were actually much more radical than Mohler's own.<sup>919</sup> Without the knowledge of his superiors, Fleig had turned the once strongly anti-fascist newspaper *Die Tat* into an organ of National Bolshevik thought.

Fleig was also connected to the Strasser circle. In 1955 Hans Fleig met Otto Strasser at least twice in Zurich. It is not difficult to discern the fingerprint of National Bolshevik

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<sup>916</sup> Weissmann, *Armin Mohler*, 54–60, 244.

<sup>917</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–62.

<sup>918</sup> R. Nadolny, "Der Amerikanische Frieden," *Die Tat*, March 31, 1951.

<sup>919</sup> Weissmann, *Armin Mohler*, 126.



thinking in Fleig's articles during this period. Like Strasser, he advocated a National Neutralist policy for Germany; i.e. a Germany which neither adheres to the Eastern nor to the Western block.<sup>920</sup> Fleig did not always succeed to dissimulate his convictions. Thus, he was not only repeatedly accused of being too pro-German and of having fascist leanings, but also of harboring strong sympathies for the Soviet Union and the Arab states. Moreover, the party organ of the Swiss Social Democrats *Volksrecht* noticed, then still staunchly anti-communist and a far cry from the ideology of the New Left, the double standards in Fleig's writing: While he harshly criticized the Western leaders, he showed leniency towards Nazi war criminals, regularly writing "*war criminals*" with quotation marks. Furthermore, Fleig blamed the Anglo-Saxon powers for the creation of Israel, calling Israel a "*political calamity*". Fleig was generally sympathetic to Nasser's pan-Arabism and to Islam. When the mayor of New York, Robert F. Wagner, refused to receive the Saudi King Ibn Saud in 1957, because he was a slaveholder. Fleig raged, calling Wagner pejoratively a "*petit bourgeois*" and then president Eisenhower together with his foreign minister, John Foster Dulles, "*Asphaltmenschen*" (Engl. city slickers), an expression commonly used by the National Socialists to designate Jewish city dwellers. In sharp contrast, Fleig would refer to the Saudi King Ibn Saud respectfully as a "*spiritual puritan*".<sup>921</sup> After mounting criticism of the political leanings of his articles, Fleig was forced to quit *Die Tat* in 1961. His next station was the *Zürcher Woche* where he continued to cover foreign affairs. He produced another scandal when he allowed Carl Schmitt, who was shunned and isolated in Germany as "*Hitler's lawyer*", to publish a front article on Rousseau.<sup>922</sup>

Hans Fleig however became famous, or rather infamous, for his defense of Nasser at a time when most of the Swiss population still sympathized with Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Already during the Suez Crisis in 1956, Fleig took sides with Nasser and against his enemies, foremost the French. This was in line with the reaction of most National Bolsheviks and German rightists, as shown above. This stance brought

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<sup>920</sup> "Fiche Hans Fleig (1949-1984)," 3–4.

<sup>921</sup> "Fleigeleien der 'Tat,'" *Volksrecht*, October 3, 1959.

<sup>922</sup> "Hitlers Hofjurist in der 'Zürcher Woche,'" *Die Tat*, June 29, 1961.

Fleig harsh criticism from his fellow Swiss journalists.<sup>923</sup> Fleig's pro-Nasser attitude did not escape the notice of the Egyptian embassy in Berne. In March 1959, its ambassador considered inviting him to Egypt along with half a dozen other Swiss journalists.<sup>924</sup> There are no records whether the journey ever took place. But not much later, in August 1959, Fleig was employed by the Egyptian embassy, when he was asked by Hamdy Abdel Wahab, cultural attaché of the Egyptian embassy, to translate articles dealing with the Near East from German to English.<sup>925</sup> The relationship with the Egyptians continued in the following years.

In 1964, Fleig's career was shattered by the *Frühschoppen* affair. On October 31, 1964, Fleig appeared on German television in Werner Höfer's widely watched show, *Internationaler Frühschoppen*, to discuss the relations between Germany, Egypt and Israel.<sup>926</sup> Fleig took a position for the Nasser regime, arguing that in fact it was not Nasser who was threatening Israel, but rather the other way around. Under these circumstances, Egypt's arms build-up was entirely justified. Moreover, he claimed to have studied all the speeches of Nasser, wherein he "*only*" called for the removal of Israel, not for the destruction of the Jewish people.<sup>927</sup> Indeed, Nasser had repeatedly called for the annihilation of Israel. For instance, in a speech in Alexandria held on July 26, 1959, Nasser proclaimed: "*I announce from here, on behalf of the United Arab*

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<sup>923</sup> "Wie einst im Mai," *Basler Nachrichten*, August 11, 1956; "Brief von Peter Dürrenmatt (Basler Nachrichten) an Erwin Jaeckle (Die Tat)," August 15, 1965, AFZ NL Erwin Jaeckle/49.

<sup>924</sup> "Fiche Hans Fleig (1949-1984)," 1.

<sup>925</sup> Ibid.

<sup>926</sup> Werner Höfer was a NSDAP-member, who had worked as a journalist in Nazi-Germany. In 1988, he was forced to step down because of an article he had penned in 1943, which defended the execution of Karlroten Kreiten, a German composer who had made critical comments on the war and Hitler. See Wilfried Scharf, *Deutsche Diskurse: die politische Kultur von 1945 bis heute in publizistischen Kontroversen* (COVERPORT, 2009), 60–62.

<sup>927</sup> "Eskapaden eines 'Ägypten-Experten'. Redaktor Hans Fleig diskreditiert die Schweiz," *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz*, November 6, 1964.

*Republic people, that this time we will exterminate Israel.*"<sup>928</sup> During the show, Fleig also questioned the legitimacy of the state of Israel and called for a resettlement of the Israeli Jews in the lost Eastern German territories (Ger. *Ostgebiete*) in order to remove this '*stumbling block*' of the Arabs. Such a resettlement, he argued, would be feasible without much economic difficulty.<sup>929</sup> These comments raised a storm of protest in the press and Fleig was accused of anti-Semitism. In response, Fleig purported that he had not called for a resettlement of the Israeli Jews, but for a second Jewish state on formerly German soil and argued that criticism of Israel was not to be equated with anti-Semitism, the standard defense of anti-Zionists.<sup>930</sup> In allusion to the many former Nazis who had found refuge in Egypt, the Zurich '*Weltwoche*' commented ironically on the affair: "*And because the Jews (...) erringly had turned the desert into a blooming garden, the German refugees from the East (Ger. Ostvertriebene) were quite agreeable to the bargain. The more so, as many among them were now able to visit their relatives, acquaintances and friends, who had moved to Egypt many years ago.*"<sup>931</sup>

It is interesting to note that probably by accident, the man sitting next to Fleig in the show, Hassan Sayed Kamil, was much more than a simple protractor to Egypt (Ger. *Ägyptenlieferant*), as he was announced to the audience of the TV-show. On the contrary, he played a crucial role in Nasser's war plans.<sup>932</sup> Kamil, a Swiss-Egyptian engineer and arms dealer, had been instructed by his friend Nasser himself to set up a network of front companies in order to procure replacement parts and equipment for Egypt's military, thereby circumventing the arms embargo imposed against the UAR. Two of these front companies, the MTP and the MECO had been registered in Zurich

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<sup>928</sup> Leonard J. Davis, *Myths and Facts 1985: A Concise Record of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: Near East Report, 1984), 198.

<sup>929</sup> "Die Juden nach Pommern? Eine Fernseh-Eskapade Hans-Fleigs," *NZZ*, November 3, 1964.

<sup>930</sup> "Israel, Nasser und die Deutschen," *Zürcher Woche*, November 6, 1964.

<sup>931</sup> H. Gmür, "Tel Aviv an der Oder," *Weltwoche*, November 6, 1964.

<sup>932</sup> George Lavy, *Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest*, 1 edition (London ; Portland, Or: Routledge, 1996), 60–62.

in 1952 and in 1960, respectively. They were involved in supplying Egypt with material for its aviation and rocket program as well as in putting German and Austrian scientists and technicians, many of them with a National Socialist background, in contact with their Egyptian counterparts.<sup>933</sup> In June 1962, Kamil barely escaped what was suspected to be an assassination attempt by the Israeli secret service, when an airplane chartered by MECO crashed in Germany, killing Kamil's German wife.<sup>934</sup> The role of Kamil became clear to the public in May 1964, five months prior to his TV appearance alongside Hans Fleig, when two Swiss employees of MECO, who furnished the Israeli secret service with internal documents, were arrested by the Swiss police and subsequently put on trial.<sup>935</sup>

The *Frühschoppen* affair had revealed Fleig's true feelings. As a result, he was officially dismissed as the foreign affairs chief at the *Zürcher Woche*.<sup>936</sup> Still, Fleig remained dedicated to the Arab cause. On December 2, 1964, Fleig was supposed to speak at a public lecture at the University of Zurich entitled "Is Nasser preparing genocide?" Fleig cancelled his appearance, maybe in light of the scandal his recent appearance on German television had caused, but he was replaced by his colleague and fellow anti-Zionist journalist, Ahmed Huber, the controversial anti-Zionist and convert to Islam.<sup>937</sup> Soon thereafter, he stood behind the creating of two pro-Arab bodies. First, he established the Swiss-Arab Documentation Centre (Ger. *Schweizerisch-Arabisches Dokumentationszentrum*), editing its bulletin *Arabische Welt* (Engl. Arabic world).<sup>938</sup>

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<sup>933</sup> Owen L. Sirrs, *Nasser and the Missile Age in the Middle East*, vol. 17, Contemporary Security Studies (London: Routledge, 2006), 22–23, 36.

<sup>934</sup> Lavy, *Germany and Israel*, 65.

<sup>935</sup> "Briefe Ohne Absender," *Der Spiegel*, May 6, 1964, 1.

<sup>936</sup> "Manipulierte Informationen," *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz*, October 18, 1968.

<sup>937</sup> Peter Woog, "Telefongespräch mit Dr. Sagalowitz" November 27, 1964, AfZ IB JUNA-Archiv / 563.

<sup>938</sup> A copy of the magazine can be found in CH-Bar#E2001E#1978/84#848\*

Moreover, in autumn 1965, Fleig established the Swiss-Arab Society with the support of the Arab League office in Geneva.<sup>939</sup>

Far from becoming a pariah, after the *Frühschoppen* affair Fleig continued to work for various newspapers and magazines. He was helped by the ascendancy of the New Left, which found his National Liberationist views increasingly acceptable. Despite his dismissal, Hans Fleig would continue to contribute to the *Zürcher Woche*'s content as a freelancer.<sup>940</sup> Another contributor to the newspaper was the anti-Semitic and pro-Arab journalist, Ahmed Huber, who penned his articles under the pseudonym, Georges Berner.<sup>941</sup> In 1967, he started writing for the *Neue Politik* of former NSDAP member Wolf Schenke, who used the magazine to voice his National Neutralist stance, like Fleig had done earlier with *Die Tat*. Though the magazine was generally considered to belong to the far-right, it also published articles by authors belonging to the New Left. Schenke himself wished for a society based on councils and was a member of the group, The Third Front, the ideological roots of which hearkened back to the Weimar National Bolsheviks.<sup>942</sup> Later, Fleig found employment as the US correspondent of the Zurich *Neue Presse*, a boulevard newspaper published by the left-wing liberal Zurich *Tages-Anzeiger* and the Basel *National-Zeitung* from 1967-1969, where he was again employed alongside Ahmed Huber. Both – expectedly – used these positions to agitate intensively against Israel.<sup>943</sup> He was professionally rehabilitated.

Apparently Fleig also felt increasingly drawn to the New Left, which shared his hostility towards the US and his affinity for the Third World. The New Left in Switzerland also seems to have seen him as one of their own. For instance, the New Left journal

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<sup>939</sup> "Memo on Hans Fleig" May 18, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

<sup>940</sup> "Manipulierte Informationen."

<sup>941</sup> Ahmed Huber and Georg Berner, "Schwarze Listen: Diskretion erwünscht," *Zürcher Woche*, April 3, 1964.

<sup>942</sup> Peter Woog, "Fleigs Neue Politik," *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz*, May 3, 1968; see also Jens Mecklenburg, *Handbuch deutscher Rechtsextremismus* (Berlin: Espresso, 1996).

<sup>943</sup> "Manipulierte Informationen."

*Neutralität*, „the first address of non-conformist journalism in Switzerland,” printed an article by Mario Cortesi in which he defended Fleig against his critics and branded him as a victim of Swiss anti-communist “*McCarthyists*.”<sup>944</sup> In 1968, Fleig was invited to take part in a panel discussion by the Social Democratic Party Zurich on the war in Vietnam. Fleig used this opportunity to condemn the American actions in Vietnam.<sup>945</sup> The line between far-right Liberation Nationalism and the New Left’s anti-imperialism was blurry.

#### 5.8 Ahmed Huber – Social Democrat and National-Socialist Muslim

In 1994, the well-known Swiss journalist Ahmed Huber was expelled by a close vote from the Social Democratic Party, after a home story revealed that he admired National Socialism and was collaborating with neo-Nazi circles. This was only one last episode in a remarkable career which is populated by Communist agents, left-wing activists, Islamists, Arab nationalists and Holocaust deniers. Before his death in a calm suburb of Berne in 2008, Huber had also made his way onto the US terror list. His contemporaries were both fascinated and confused by Huber’s politics, which defied any clear divide between the Left and the Right. However, Ahmed Huber’s politics suddenly become understandable when we understand him as a modern National Bolshevik or National Liberationist.

Albert Armand Huber, the future Ahmed Huber, was born on March 25, 1927, to a wealthy Protestant family in the Catholic conservative canton of Fribourg.<sup>946</sup> After passing his school leaving exam in 1947, he commenced studies in law and national economics. Despite claiming otherwise, he never seems to have graduated from his

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<sup>944</sup> Mario Cortesi, “Halali auf Hans Fleig,” *Neutralität* 5, no. 5/6 (1967); F. Lerch, “Zwei Hälften machen noch kein Ganzes,” February 2, 2006.

<sup>945</sup> “Fiche Hans Fleig (1949-1984),” 7.

<sup>946</sup> Urs Paul Engeler, “Ahmed Huber (1927-2008). Jeden Morgen war der Geschäftige im Palais Fédéral,” *Weltwoche*, May 29, 2008.

studies.<sup>947</sup> During his student years, he became a member of the liberal fraternity, Zofingia, from which he was expelled after publishing allegedly slanderous articles against his fellow members in the Social Democratic newspaper *Berner Tagwacht*.<sup>948</sup> In the 1950s, he frequented the progressive *Kerzenkreis* in Berne, a circle around Reform pedagogue Begert, which held weekly lectures and discussions.<sup>949</sup> The circle was a predecessor of the Nonconformist movement, “a mix of 1960s counterculture activists, poets, painters, and New Leftists.”<sup>950</sup> Throughout the 50s and 60s, Huber would be very active at the heart of the Nonconformists movement. From 1952 until his exclusion in 1994 for collaboration with neo-Nazis and repeated Holocaust-denial, Huber was a member of the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland. He worked as a journalist for several newspapers, mainly as a correspondent at the Federal Palace of Switzerland.

In his younger years, Huber was known for his communist sympathies and was suspected of collaborating with the Eastern Bloc. He was therefore investigated. Police surveillance indeed confirmed that Ahmed Huber repeatedly consorted with diplomats from the Eastern Bloc. On November 9, 1961, Huber had dinner with the Soviet cultural attaché, Vyacheslav (Dmitriyevich) Semenov, at a restaurant in a suburb of Berne. Parts of the conversation were overheard by a female officer of the municipal police of Berne and concerned Swiss politics and the army. The dinner was paid for by

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<sup>947</sup> “Pourquoi Je Me Suis Converti à l’Islam. Albert Huber Devenu Ahmed Abdallah Ramadan El Souesri,” *Mimbar El Islam*, March 1963, 188; EPD, “Memo for Federal Councillor Wahlen on Albert Huber” June 6, 1963, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>948</sup> EPD, “Memo for Federal Councillor Wahlen on Albert Huber” June 6, 1963, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>949</sup> Peter Niggli and Jürg Frischknecht, *Rechte Seilschaften: wie die “unheimlichen Patrioten” den Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus meisterten* (Rotpunktverlag, 1998), 271; see also Fredi Lerch, *Muellers Weg ins Paradies: Nonkonformismus im Bern der sechziger Jahre* (Rotpunktverlag, 2001).

<sup>950</sup> Kevin Coogan, “The Mysterious Achmed Huber: Friend to Hitler, Allah... and Bin Laden,” *Free Republic*, May 2002.

the Soviet official.<sup>951</sup> After this first encounter, the connection with Semenov continued and both would meet regularly or talk on the phone.<sup>952</sup> Albert Huber evidently also carried out small tasks for the Soviet embassy: When posters advertising the shows of a Georgian dancing group were banned in Berne in September 1962, Semenov asked Huber to find out who was responsible for the ban. Subsequently, Huber provided the information and penned an article for the Social Democratic newspaper *Tagwacht* on September 10, 1962, ridiculing the decision of the municipal authorities in Berne.<sup>953</sup> Not everyone in the Social Democratic party agreed. Fritz Marbach, a member of the non-socialist wing of the party, who penned a reply in the same newspaper, expressed understanding for the ban by pointing to the propagandistic intent the Soviets placed in sending their best artists abroad.<sup>954</sup> In addition to his journalistic advocacy for the Eastern Bloc, Huber would also send public governmental reports to Semenov, among others those of the Swiss Department of Economy (Ger. *Volkswirtschaftsdepartement*).<sup>955</sup> Since early 1962 Huber was also in contact with another Eastern Bloc official, Lajos Rac. Rac was the second secretary (Ger. *Legationsrat*) at the Hungarian embassy in Berne and – as the Swiss were informed – also a member of the Hungarian secret police, the AVH.<sup>956</sup> These regular contacts with

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<sup>951</sup> Police Service of the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland, “Meeting of Albert Huber and the Soviet Cultural Attaché” November 10, 1961, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>952</sup> Sicherheits- und Kriminalpolizei (SIKRIPO) Bern, “Memo on Albert Huber” October 3, 1962, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>953</sup> Ahmed Huber, “Angst vor Tänzern aus Georgien. Seltsame Praxis der Berner Polizeibehörden,” *Berner Tagwacht*, September 10, 1962.

<sup>954</sup> Fritz Marbach, “Angst vor Tänzern aus Georgien?,” *Berner Tagwacht*, September 14, 1962.

<sup>955</sup> Office of the Attorney General, “Testimony on Albert Huber by His Superiors” May 3, 1962, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>956</sup> The AVH was officially disbanded in 1956. It is not clear whether the Swiss assumed that Rac was still active for the AVH in 1962, when the note was written, or whether it is a reference to the past.



officials from the Eastern Bloc aroused suspicions in the Swiss Army, in which Huber served as a militia officer. The Army therefore started its own investigation.

Interviews with some of Huber's acquaintances drew a complicated picture of Huber. Since gymnasium, he was convinced of an eventual Soviet victory and opposed anti-communism. Huber was a colorful character. He evidently had charisma and was quite charming, exerting a great fascination on many. But he also had a great craving for recognition, expressed in a tendency to gossip and to brag. He and his adherents would gather in the Café Madrid in Berne. There, Huber would flaunt his intensive contacts with Eastern and Arab officials. Huber also had a streak of eccentricity, once dressing up as Adolf Hitler for a whole evening. Meanwhile he earned a reputation as a provocateur in the army, where he held the rank of a senior lieutenant. In one instance, he discussed the question of refusal of army service in a positive way with his subordinate soldiers.<sup>957</sup> Two superiors of Huber characterized him in similar terms. They described him as a braggard lacking in competence. But they admitted that he was a great entertainer, who had mastered Russian, Arabic and African accents and was a gifted actor. His great admiration for Nasser and his United Arab Republic did not escape their attention. Perhaps surprisingly, they nevertheless commended him on a talk he had held for his soldiers on the dangers of communism.<sup>958</sup> As a result of the investigation, Huber's access to confidential files was cancelled in late April 1962, but he was not expelled from the army.<sup>959</sup> In 1963, he was transferred to another unit and in 1964 was eventually granted special leave from the army. Huber was re-admitted to the Swiss Army in 1968. Promptly, Huber caused unease among his officer colleagues, with whom he attended a military education class in the same year. Huber decorated his room with portraits of Mao and openly expressed his communist sympathies. Despite the investigation, Huber continued to maintain contact with the Eastern Bloc representatives. The Swiss police counted occasional meetings with

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<sup>957</sup> EMD, "Testimony on Albert Huber" April 25, 1962, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>958</sup> Office of the Attorney General, "Testimony on Albert Huber by His Superiors."

<sup>959</sup> Office of the Attorney General, "Measures Concerning the Causa Huber" April 30, 1962, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

diplomats and no less than 29 visits to the Soviet, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Cuban and Yugoslavian embassies in the period of 1962 until 1968.<sup>960</sup> It is unlikely that Huber was ever a professional spy, but he certainly worked as an informer and supported the Eastern Bloc through his journalistic work. More than that however, Huber seems to have enjoyed his provocations.

More than his friendship with the Eastern Bloc, his infatuation with Arabs and Islam determined his future career. Towards the end of 1959, Ahmed Huber was asked by a friend to hide three members of the Algerian national movement, *Front de Libération National* (FLN). In the late 50s and early 60s, Switzerland and especially Geneva was a center of activity for both the Algerian national movement and French security services. This meeting seems to have left a profound impression on him. In an autobiographical text published in 1987 in the widely-circulated Swiss magazine *Schweizer Illustrierte*, Huber described how the three Algerians in hiding introduced him to the teachings of Islam while “*criticizing some teachings not originating from God in the Jewish-Christian bible; The doctrine of the chosen people led in the end to the Western racism as well as to the Arian cult of Adolf Hitler and to the proletarian cult of Karl Marx; the teaching of the promised land has produced colonialism, the church has been secularized to the one party state and the doctrine of a plan of salvation comprehensible to humans has resulted in the murderous west-eastern ‘ideologies of progress.’*”<sup>961</sup> As we can see, Huber blames the Jews and their teachings for the development of racism, National Socialism and Communism, as well as for “*the murderous west-eastern ‘ideologies of progress’*”. This short anti-Semitic credo is a good summary of the lifelong convictions of Ahmed Huber. The argument that the Jews are to blame for the development of racism seems central to Huber’s thinking: One finds it also in another story of his conversion to Islam, told in Péan’s biography of

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<sup>960</sup> Bundespolizei, “Summary Report on Albert Huber” May 29, 1969, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135; Stadtpolizei Bern, “Treffen mit einem Beamten der Bulgarischen Botschaft durch Albert Huber” February 15, 1967, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>961</sup> Ahmed Huber, “Von Bern nach Mekka,” *Schweizer Illustrierte*, August 10, 1987, 112–13.

François Genoud of 1996: “I worked, I informed myself on Islam. I had answers for concrete questions: For example, the conception of God, the contradictions between faith and reason, the notion of a chosen people (profound reason for racism...). When I realized that Allah was also the creator of evil, I had peace in me, I finally found unity.”<sup>962</sup> It is notable that Huber’s attribution of the invention of racism to the Jewish people themselves is an ancient topic in anti-Jewish literature. For instance, it was rampant in Spain during the persecution of Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity starting in the 14th century. So-called ‘purity of blood’ laws against Jewish converts to Christianity were justified by asserting that the Jews themselves were the original inventors of such laws.<sup>963</sup> Huber’s Islamophilia was always closely connected to his anti-Semitism.

After his conversation with the Algerians, Huber was, according to his own words, confused as well as deeply impressed with the teachings of Islam. In early 1961, he finally converted to Islam in the Islamic center of Geneva.<sup>964</sup> He must have been one of the first converts there, as the mosque was only founded in 1961 by the Muslim Brotherhood theoretician and leader, Saïd Ramadan, who, after an odyssey through several countries of the Middle East whence he was repeatedly expelled, settled in Geneva in 1958. There he published his magazine ‘*Al muslimoon*’ and became instrumental in the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood network in Europe.<sup>965</sup>

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<sup>962</sup> Pean, *L’Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 212.

<sup>963</sup> See David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, Reprint (New York: Norton & Company, 2014).

<sup>964</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Junge Sektion der Partei der Arbeit Zürich. Vortragsabend mit Albert Huber” June 7, 1967, 212, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135; Pean, *L’Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 212.

<sup>965</sup> Centre Islamique de Genève, “Les Frères Musulmans-Politique de ‘Rabbaniyya’, Les Prières Avant Le Pouvoir,” accessed September 28, 2017, <http://www.cige.org/cige/historique.html>; for a detailed discussion on Ramadan’s role in the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood network in Europe see Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (Columbia University Press, 2010), 28–31; see also Stefan Meining, *Eine Moschee in Deutschland: Nazis*,

Geneva was then contested ground, as the city hosted not only the Islamic Center of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been outlawed and brutally repressed in Egypt since 1954 but was also the site of the Arab Information Office, which was entertained by the Arab League and engaged in spreading pro-Nasser propaganda. Interestingly, Huber soon changed to the camp of the Nasserists. Since at least 1962, Huber frequented Arab diplomatic circles. During this period, Switzerland and Nasser's Egypt were involved in negotiations over the financial compensation for Swiss property nationalized by Egypt. As in the case of the Georgian dance group for the Soviet embassy, Huber used his influential position as a journalist to spread the Egyptian viewpoint in the Swiss media. In July 1962, in a phone call to the first secretary of the Egyptian embassy, he informed him of an article he had penned in the *Tagwacht* defending Arab socialism. He asserted that his next article on the Swiss-Egyptian negotiations would equally "*mainly explain your position.*"<sup>966</sup> In the course of this conversation, Huber suggested to the diplomat that he should link the Swiss call for restitution of Swiss property in Egypt with the existence of Swiss property in Israel during the negotiations, implying that the Swiss would only receive restitution when Swiss Jews were banned from investing in Israel. Huber told him: "*Do you think that the problem of Jewish property in Switzerland plays a role therein [in the negotiations]? Because your government tells the Swiss government we agree to negotiate with you (...), but you also have to do everything that Swiss money does not go to Israel.*"<sup>967</sup> The two questions were obviously not related. Even the Egyptian diplomat reacted reticently to Huber's enthusiastic suggestions. Still, Huber was invited to the embassy of the UAR in Berne, where he met with ambassador Fathi al-Dib.<sup>968</sup> The exact chronology is not known, and it is not clear whether this invitation took place before or

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*Geheimdienste und der Aufstieg des politischen Islam im Westen* (München: C.H. Beck, 2011); Ian Johnson, *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010).

<sup>966</sup> "Telephone Protocol Albert Huber, Socialist Press Service Berne" July 25, 1962, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135.

<sup>967</sup> Ibid.

<sup>968</sup> *L'Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 212–13.

after Huber's conversation with the first secretary, but Al-Dib was to play an important role in Huber's path to his second conversion to Islam.

Al-Dib was in fact no simple diplomat, but the chief of Egypt's secret services. He had played a crucial role in organizing the arms supply for the FLN, whereby he enlisted the help of German National Socialists. This had also brought him into contact with François Genoud.<sup>969</sup> In 1961, Nasser sent al-Dib to Switzerland, where he was tasked with supporting the Algerians at the peace negotiations in Evian between the French and the FLN. In this endeavor, he again counted on the help of his collaborator François Genoud.<sup>970</sup> The same al-Dib convinced Huber to distance himself from the Muslim Brotherhood, which sought to topple the Egyptian regime of General Nasser. Instead, he asked him to repeat his conversion in Egypt. In January 1963, Huber was invited by the Ministry of Information to Egypt. There he converted for the second time at the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo and adopted the Muslim name, Ahmed Abdallah Ramadan El Swisseri. Henceforth, he would call himself Ahmed Huber.<sup>971</sup> Underlining the importance his Egyptian hosts placed in the conversion, the man who accepted Huber's shahada, the Islamic confession of faith, was a man of the highest religious stature: Mahmud Shaltut, the Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar University from 1958 until 1963.<sup>972</sup> Upon his return to Switzerland, born again Ahmed Huber paid a visit to the Egyptian embassy, where he met his future wife, Zeinab el Biali, the secretary of Fathi al-Dib.<sup>973</sup> It was truly a life-changing visit.

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<sup>969</sup> Ibid., 230–32. Péan writes that Huber converted at the Al-Azhar in 1962. A perusal of the sources shows that it must have taken place in 1963.

<sup>970</sup> Ibid., 240–43.

<sup>971</sup> Ibid., 212; "Albert Huber, Journaliste Suisse Converti à l'Islam. Il Faut Contrecarrer La Propagande Sioniste En Suisse," *Images*, February 23, 1963, 16–17.

<sup>972</sup> "The West Is No More Fooled by Zionists. Zionism Is Nothing but Neo-Nazism," *Baghdad Observer*, February 14, 1963.

<sup>973</sup> Pean, *L'Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 212.

Huber's conversion was a media event in both Egypt and Switzerland and also received significant political attention. Federal councilor Wahlen was informed of the details with a special memorandum and several Swiss newspapers reported on Huber.<sup>974</sup> They were not alone: Egyptian media celebrated the convert from Switzerland like a pop-star. The magazine *'Images'* dedicated a richly illustrated two-page report to Huber's conversion. The attention and Huber's own statements made it clear from the beginning that his conversion, far from being a simple change of religion, carried an explicit political message. When talking to the magazine *'Images'*, he expressed his strong sympathy for Nasser before even mentioning Islam: *"I was profoundly moved by the renaissance of the Arab people of Egypt after 2500 years of foreign domination. President Nasser was the awakener of these feelings of independence and of the march towards progress."*<sup>975</sup> According to the interview, Huber saw himself as a lonely fighter against 'Zionist Propaganda' in Switzerland: *"I always took the position of the Arab world in Switzerland, where a Zionist movement makes itself felt more and more. The Swiss who are sentimental are convinced that the Jewish people who have been longtime persecuted, in the end by the Nazis, have a right to find peace again in Israel. The Zionist propaganda is becoming more cunning and is gaining ground. [...] one injustice – the plundering of Arab Palestine – does not make good other injustices committed against the Jewish people. This attitude and the fight of the Arab people as well as the reforms have pushed me to the opposing view of this Zionist propaganda in my country."*<sup>976</sup> It was the familiar picture of Jewish power that Huber evoked in these lines.

Besides anti-Zionism and Arab nationalism, Huber pledged to make the defense and propagation of Islam another cornerstone of his journalistic work. In the magazine *'Mimbar el Islam'* he related the story of his conversion to Islam. Again, the political background of his conversion became evident. He cited the start of the French-Algerian

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<sup>974</sup> 06.06.1963, *Memo for federal councilor Wahlen on Albert Huber*, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/392#135

<sup>975</sup> "Albert Huber, Journaliste Suisse Converti à l'Islam. Il Faut Contrecarrer La Propagande Sioniste En Suisse."

<sup>976</sup> Ibid.

war in 1954 and the Suez War of 1956 as being the origins of his eventual conversion to Islam. A passionate speech on his new religion marks the climax of the article: *“I will start to dedicate my feather to defend Islam. I will set out to refute the mendacious slanders which the occidentals try to attribute to Islam. I will convert my feather into a torch to enlighten the way for all [the] undecided. I will be the first to write about the truth of Islam in my country because I have come to know it and I was convinced by it.”*<sup>977</sup> Between 1963 and 1965, Huber would return several times to Cairo to meet with the National Socialist, Johann von Leers, who now worked for Nasser’s propaganda, as discussed above.<sup>978</sup> Leers’ ideas, like Huber, a man with a mixed history of far right, left-wing and pro-Soviet activism, had a crucial influence on Huber’s thinking. The convergence of Islam and National Socialism advocated by von Leers fascinated Huber. Until then, Huber told a journalist in 2004, he had known little about the Third Reich and *“believed in all Zionist propaganda [...] and now I heard from Von Leers, that Islam was the only religion, which was respected by the Führer and that he tried to forge an alliance between crescent moon and swastika. This was all completely new to me.”*<sup>979</sup> At the intercession of von Leers, Huber was also awarded the chance to meet Haj Amin al-Husseini, the doyen of Arab-Palestinian nationalism and former Nazi collaborator, in Beirut in 1965.<sup>980</sup> It was in this period that Huber formed a comprehensive world view: The ideologies of anti-Semitism, Arab nationalism, anti-imperialism and militant Islam formed the base for Huber’s activism. It was these convictions which informed his anti-Zionist activism.

Huber’s open plans to act henceforth as a propagandist for the anti-Zionist, Arab nationalist and Islamic cause were critically commented on by the Swiss press. The NZZ wrote incisively: *“With the political-journalistic intent [of Ahmed Huber] the conversion of Ahmed Huber moves from the private level to the level of public interest. Foremost one is permitted to raise the question, what stand the [...] leadership of the*

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<sup>977</sup> “Pourquoi Je Me Suis Converti à l’Islam. Albert Huber Devenu Ahmed Abdallah Ramadan El Souesri.”

<sup>978</sup> Péan, P., *L’extrémiste*, p 213

<sup>979</sup> Martin Beglinger, “Herr Huber,” *Das Magazin*, May 22, 2004, 20.

<sup>980</sup> Ibid.

*Social Democratic Party of Switzerland will take on the unconditional dedication of an employee of its federal press agency to a man like Nasser [...]. Furthermore, it would be of interest for broader circles, whether the party fellows of Ahmed Abdallah [...] also are of the opinion, that Zionist propaganda is being spread, to which has to be put a stop immediately by an Islamic emissary from the Arab world.*<sup>981</sup> Huber, who seems to have been devoid of any self-criticism, must have only felt emboldened by such criticism.

Coinciding with his ideological maturation, Huber became a leading figure in Swiss anti-Zionist circles, both in his function as a regular speaker at anti-Zionist events and as a journalist. Together with the similar-minded Hans Fleig, he wrote for the *Zürcher Woche*, where both stood out for taking sides with Arab nationalism. Under his pseudonym, Georg Berner, for instance, Huber penned an article on the boycott measures of Arab states vis-à-vis Israel and companies involved in trade with Israel. Therein, he compares the Arab boycott of Israel to the Allies' boycott of Nazi Germany and the US boycott of communist states in his own time. Implicitly, he recommends to Swiss companies to abide by the boycott due to the greater economic weight of the Arab states in comparison to Israel's.<sup>982</sup> Huber's stance and open propaganda eventually became intolerable for the still pro-Western and pro-Israeli Social Democratic Party. On September 30, 1967 the party's board decided to dismiss him immediately from his post at the Social Democratic press agency in Berne. In the New Left magazine, *Neutralität*, Huber commented on his dismissal with the words: *"My policy towards the Near East was the final straw for our bigwigs. Qui vivra, on verra [Engl. who will live, we will see]."* Huber's words would prove ominous.

After his dismissal in 1967 as correspondent for the Social Democratic party press on the grounds of his Arab nationalist and anti-Zionist propaganda activity, Huber continued to be a member of the party. In fact, he succeeded in making friends among the Far and New Left, despite his repeated Islamist and anti-Semitic positions during those years. In an article published in 1967 with the title of *'Koran und der israelitische Staat'* [Engl. Koran and the Israelite State] in *Neutralität*, Huber interprets the Arab-Israeli conflict as a religious conflict: For the Arab Muslims, it is foremost understood

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<sup>981</sup> "Der Konvertit," *NZZ*, June 4, 1963.

<sup>982</sup> Huber and Berner, "Schwarze Listen: Diskretion erwünscht."



in religious terms and its peaceful resolution is therefore impossible. He argues, that it is “(...) the religious aspects (...), which control the Near-East conflict (at least from the Arab-Islamic side) and are the decisive reason for the fact that for Israel (...) there is no recognition and peace.”<sup>983</sup> Huber sees the Muslims involved in a holy war against the intruding Israeli Jews: “(He, who) settles in the realm of Islam with cunning and violence and besets or expels Muslims, against him God commands in the Koran the holy defense war of Islam.”<sup>984</sup> For Peter Woog, head of the Swiss Jewish community’s intelligence service, JUNA, the concept of “*realm of Islam*” was reminiscent of the *völkisch* ideas of *Lebensraum* in Nazi-Germany: “The Arab claim on this strip of land rests on bare expansion policy, which is disguised with – lent from the Koran by Huber on his own responsibility - *völkisch* theses. These only too familiar geopolitical slogans brought forth by a socialist Journalist from Switzerland are only different in their origin from the Hitlerlian catchphrases of Germanity (Ger. *Deutschtum*) and *Lebensraum*.”<sup>985</sup> In another article ‘*Plädoyer für Rassenmischung*’ [Engl. Plea for Racial Mixing] published in ‘*Neutralität*’ in 1968, Huber tries to prove that the teachings of the Old Testament are the source of racism. According to Huber, these concepts entered the mind-set of the West, while they remained alien to the religions of Asia and Africa, in particular Islam.<sup>986</sup>

The changing political landscape and the ascendancy of the New Left would turn Huber’s positions, hitherto considered on the extreme fringe of the political spectrum, increasingly mainstream. Theo Pinkus in Zurich, a prominent member of the Swiss Communist Party PDA and of Jewish origin, was especially close to Huber. The two would regularly call each other to discuss matters of politics. For the *Zeitdienst*, a weekly publication edited by Theo’s son, Marco Pinkus, the leader of the Communist Party of Labor Youth (Ger. *Partei der Arbeit*) in Zurich, Huber penned articles on the Arab-Israeli conflict, in which he denied Israel’s right to exist. Huber’s collaboration was

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<sup>983</sup> cited in Peter Woog, “Entwurf zu ‘Lässt sich der Israel-Hass der Araber rechtfertigen,’” *Der Bund*, September 24, 1967, AfZ IB JUNA-Archiv / 563.

<sup>984</sup> cited in *ibid.*

<sup>985</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>986</sup> Späti, *Die schweizerische Linke und Israel*, 130.

not approved by everybody. The newspaper's editor in chief, Dr. Hugo Kramer, reproached him for producing Arab propaganda, which bore no connection to socialism or peace work.<sup>987</sup> In June 1967, Marco Pinkus invited Huber to speak on the subject of foreign aid. In this talk, Huber underlined the importance of Hitler and the Japanese in the anti-colonial fight, as they had proved that the imperialist powers could be beaten. While financial foreign aid was ineffective, there was a need for political foreign aid. He furthermore confessed that he was no Marxist.<sup>988</sup> Meanwhile, Huber, also continued to be very active among the Nonconformists, especially within the frame of the *Junkere 37*, a meeting point for adherents of the New Left and progressives in Berne. There, he gave several talks and participated eagerly in the discussions. Other stations of Huber in the New Left included the anti-nuclear movement, the *Peuple et Culture* association in Geneva and the *Forum Politicum* in Berne, a student group founded in 1966, which turned into an umbrella organization of the New Left in Berne and was active in the Vietnam solidarity movement.<sup>989</sup> Huber, who was a sharp critic of the Swiss armaments policy during the Cold War, served as a political advisor to the group.<sup>990</sup> During the 1970s, he continued to write for the left-liberal newspaper *Nationalzeitung*, which became the *Basler Zeitung* in 1977, and in which he was one of the defining voices. Nobody seems to remark upon his obvious anti-Semitism, although he occasionally cites Hitler when attacking his political enemies.<sup>991</sup> Despite his various engagements, Huber struggled financially after his dismissal from the

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<sup>987</sup> Bundespolizei, "Summary Report on Albert Huber"; Späti, *Die schweizerische Linke und Israel*, 130.

<sup>988</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, "Junge Sektion der Partei der Arbeit Zürich. Vortragsabend mit Albert Huber."

<sup>989</sup> Marc Griesshammer, "Zwischen Friedenswunsch und Weltrevolution. Die Vietnamsolidarität in der Schweiz 1965-1974" (Lizentiatsarbeit, Universität Bern, 2005), 20–21.

<sup>990</sup> Bundespolizei, "Summary Report on Albert Huber."

<sup>991</sup> Niggli and Frischknecht, *Rechte Seilschaften*, 690–91. f

Social Democratic press. From 1970 onwards, Ahmed Huber was therefore provided with money and work by the Arab League Office in Geneva.<sup>992</sup>

How can Huber's renewed integration into the Left be explained? In the course of the 1960s and early 1970s, the anti-colonial struggle started to define the ideology of the Swiss Left in general and the New Left in particular, while class struggle and the advocacy of native worker's rights began to lose importance. This was anachronistic, as most former colonies had already gained independence by this time. In the eyes of the New Left though, the Third World was dominated by the neo-Imperialism of the West led by the United States, which exploited its people. Thus, class struggle was largely replaced by national struggle against an oppressive West. The Israeli-Arab conflict played – and continues to play – an important role in this world view. For various reasons, which cannot be expounded here in detail, it came to be seen by the Left as an anti-imperial struggle. Israel was identified as an imperial power, bent on expanding its territory and acquiring new commodities, while the Arab-Palestinians were their oppressed subjects. The New Left as a matter of fact rehabilitated nationalism, at least in its non-Western form. The extreme Arab nationalism and anti-Zionism which had led to Huber's marginalization from the Old Left, consequently became his entry ticket into the New Left. Elevating anti-Western politics and support of Third World nationalism to its sine-qua-non-principle, the politics of the New Left became in fact very close to that National Liberationism, which had strongly influenced Arab solidarity circles in the 1950s and 1960s, although without the component of German nationalism. This blurring of the Right-Left divide cannot only be observed in Switzerland, but is a general mark of the times. In France, parallel to the New Left, a new movement called the '*Nouvelle Droite*' (Engl. New Right) emerges after 1968. It is steeped in the same intellectual tradition as National Bolshevism. Its leader, Alain de Benoist, would draw on the writings of the German national revolutionary thinkers of the interwar period: Jünger, Moeller van den Bruck or Oswald Spengler. The New Right argues that secular Western ideologies like liberalism or socialism are products of the Judeo-Christian

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<sup>992</sup> Service Politique du Corps de Police, République et Canton de Genève, "Contrôle Téléphonique de La Délégation Permanente de La Ligue Des Etats Arabes, Avenue Krieg 7, 12. 1. 1970 - 26. 7. 1970" July 31, 1970, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

tradition. They share its universalistic, materialist and egalitarian spirit and are bent on homogenizing different cultures. Therefore, they are condemned by the '*Nouvelle Droite*' as racist and totalitarian. Their opposition to the West is not restricted to matters of thought. Rather, they share the New Left's visceral hatred of the US and avidly support Third World nationalist movements.<sup>993</sup> In fact, there are good arguments to make a case that the New Left transcended the old Right-Left divide like National Bolshevism and National Liberationism had done before.

## 5.9 Conclusion

Both Germany and the Arab states sought to revive the German-Arab friendship after World War II. Adenauer's policy to seek friendly relations with Israel and provide limited restitution for the victims of the Holocaust was seen by both the Arabs and by several local Orientalists, who had determined Germany's Middle East policy during the past decades, as a challenge to this friendship. German and Arab opponents of Israel therefore cooperated in order to sabotage the German-Israeli restitution negotiations. These efforts were unsuccessful. However, the Arab world and in particular Egypt became a place of yearning for the German far-right, where several of them settled in the following years. Just a few years later, in 1956, the Suez Crisis led to the creation of multiple pro-Arab organizations in Germany. These developments also affected Switzerland, where the first pro-Arab association was founded by the National Socialist, François Genoud in 1956. All of the leaders of these groups belonged to the far-right scene. Most however were under the influence of Ernst Niekisch's National Bolshevism, or rather, how it became to be known, National Liberationism. The basis of Niekisch's anti-imperialism was his conviction that Germany was not part of the West, but itself had been a victim of Western colonialism. Niekisch was also an anti-Semite, although he considered Christianity his main foe. These two elements of his ideology inspired his followers' politics. His adherents therefore tended to express solidarity with the Soviet Union and the Third World, in particular Egypt, while they abhorred the US and Israel. Niekisch's geopolitics, rather than Hitler's, inspired a significant element of the German far-right in the 1950s. It was this milieu where

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<sup>993</sup>Tamir Bar-On, "The Ambiguities of the Nouvelle Droite, 1968-1999," *The European Legacy* 6, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 336–40, doi:10.1080/10848770120051349.

Johann von Leers, the Nazi propagandist working for Nasser, hailed from. The Arab diplomats in Germany, in particular Arab League representative Hassan Fakoussa, were eager to collaborate with this pro-Arab German far-right. During the 1960s, Gerhard Frey's *Nationalzeitung* worked as a non-official organ for Nasser, singing his praise.

Liberation Nationalism also influenced two journalists in Switzerland, Hans Fleig and Ahmed Huber. They were united by their sympathy for Nasser and the Soviet Union, their anti-Semitism and their hatred of Israel. Both can be counted as pioneers of anti-Zionism in Switzerland and collaborated with officials of the Arab League and Arab diplomatic staff. Huber's pro-Arab sympathy was at the origin of his conversion to Islam. While drawn to the Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood at first, he soon converted to the official Islam of Nasser's Egypt. This was not coincidental: For Huber, Islam had a strong political note and served to underpin his anti-Zionism and Arab nationalism. He declared Israel not only to be Arab land, but also to be Islamic land, therefore making any peace with the Jewish state impossible. Huber was probably the first native Islamist in Switzerland. Both Ahmed Huber and Hans Fleig produced several scandals in the 1960s with their anti-Israeli and pro-Nazi statements, resulting in their marginalization. But in the second half of the 1960s, both were recognized by the New Left as one of their own, ignoring their anti-Semitism and far-right sympathies. To a significant degree, New Left Anti-Imperialism and National Bolshevik Liberation Nationalism were compatible in their politics.

## 6 The Arab League Propaganda Infrastructure and its Partners

The Arab propaganda institutions had suffered a crushing defeat at the UN in 1947. It would take several years for them to recover. Egypt, which had been led by the charismatic strongman, Gamal Nasser, since 1952, turned the Arab League into an instrument of his pan-Arab foreign policy. Since the 1950s, the Arab states established a propaganda network covering five continents but concentrated on the US and later Europe. They profited from the support of various anti-Zionist groups and activists of different political hues. The development of Arab propaganda networks is clearly related to political events in the Near East. The relaxation of inter-Arab rivalry after 1964 and the defeat in the Six-Day War led to a dramatic expansion of pro-Arab networks. Increasingly, Arab League propaganda no longer sought to address the majority, but sought to collaborate with fringe elements of society like the New Left. The workings of such collaboration are analyzed in a case study at the end of this chapter, which deals with the propaganda campaign for three PFLP terrorists in Switzerland.

### 6.1 The Expansion of the Arab League Propaganda Activities

This subchapter deals with the Arab League public diplomacy effort from 1948 until the late 1960s. Although the Arab states carried out their own and often congruent public diplomacy effort, most of the activity was organized within the framework of the League of the Arab states. A public diplomacy department within the Arab League was first set up in April 1946.<sup>994</sup> However, after the disbanding of the Arab Office in Washington in 1948, Arab League propaganda activity in Western countries ceased for some years. Under the dictatorship of the Free Officers, Egypt pursued an aggressive and costly foreign policy. In fact, all tools of foreign policy, including propaganda and subversion,

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<sup>994</sup> May Abdallah-Sinno, *Le Rôle de l'information de La Ligue Des États Arabes* (Université Stendhal (Grenoble), 1986), 119–20, 130–35, 280, <http://www.theses.fr/1986GRE39036>.

were put in the service of realizing Egypt's primary foreign policy goal of attaining regional dominance and cementing Egypt's claim to the leadership of pan-Arabism. On the payroll of the Egyptian state since the mid-1950s, legions of educators and professionals were seconded to Arab nations where they not only provided development aid, but also spread pro-Egyptian and pan-Arab propaganda.<sup>995</sup> As already discussed earlier, partly with German and American help, Egypt also set up and operated the radio station, *Voice of the Arabs*.<sup>996</sup> It quickly became a highly efficient propaganda tool against Egypt's regional rivals. Thus, Egyptian propaganda was instrumental in inciting the Jordanian populace in winter 1955/56 against the government's decision to join the military alliance of the Baghdad Pact. Under the pressure (?) of violent protest, the Jordanian government eventually withdrew from its earlier decision, providing Egypt with a spectacular triumph.<sup>997</sup>

Egypt had dominated the Arab League since its foundation. Egypt, then still a relatively wealthy state, carried half of the financial burden of the Arab League until the mid-1960s. Cairo harbored the Arab League's headquarters. Its first three Secretary Generals were all Egyptians, as was an overwhelming majority of their staff, including that of the Arab League Information Offices abroad. General Secretary Abdul Khalek Hassouna, who headed the Arab League for 20 years from 1952-1972, had been directly selected by the Egyptian government to fill the job. Under Nasser, Egypt's dominance grew even stronger, turning the Arab League de facto into a tool of Egyptian foreign policy. After all, the foreign policy goals of the Arab League and Egypt, Arab

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<sup>995</sup> Gerasimos Tsourapas, "Nasser's Educators and Agitators across Al-Watan Al-'Arabi: Tracing the Foreign Policy Importance of Egyptian Regional Migration, 1952-1967," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 324–41, doi:10.1080/13530194.2015.1102708.

<sup>996</sup> Sirrs, *A History of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, A History of the Mukhabarat, 1910–2009*, 45; on *Voice of the Arabs*, see also Hatem, *Information and the Arab Cause*, 165–84.

<sup>997</sup> A.I. Dawisha, "The Role of Propaganda in Egypt's Arab Policy, 1955-1967," *International Relations* 5, no. 2 (1975): 897–907.

unity, were largely overlapping.<sup>998</sup> The Arab League's inclination toward the extensive use of international propaganda, which mirrored that of the Nasser regime, should therefore also be understood as a function of Egypt's influence. At first, Arab propaganda was concentrated at the UN in New York and designed to convince other nations of their viewpoints, especially regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. For this purpose, the Arab League installed a Permanent Observer at the UN in 1952.<sup>999</sup> Only in 1953 did the Arab League establish a Department for Information and Publication, which assumed responsibility for foreign propaganda.<sup>1000</sup> Again, the US took the center stage. Out of the Arab League presence at the UN grew the Arab Information Office, which was opened in New York in 1955. This was followed by a rapid expansion of Arab Offices on all continents except Australia. Most Offices were located in Western Europe and the US, underlining the importance the Western public played in the Arab states' foreign policy calculations. The Arab League representatives did not enjoy diplomatic immunity in the Western European countries. They were therefore usually attached to the embassy of an Arab country.<sup>1001</sup> The activities of the Arab League Offices in the United States, Germany and Switzerland will be analyzed in detail in the course of this chapter.

As mentioned, the second half of the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s was marked by the rapid expansion of the Arab Office network. During their April session in 1956, the political committee of the Arab League decided to open propaganda offices in Geneva, Brazil and Argentina.<sup>1002</sup> In November 1957, an Arab Information Congress

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<sup>998</sup> Tawfig Y. Hasou, *Struggle For The Arab World*, 1 edition (London ; Boston : Boston, Mass., USA: Routledge, 1985), 17–47.

<sup>999</sup> Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States," 55.

<sup>1000</sup> Michael W. Suleiman, "The Arab Information Effort in North America: An Assessment," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 1986, 268–69.

<sup>1001</sup> AA and Hermann Voigt, "Betr. Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" December 29, 1958, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1002</sup> P. M., "Riunione Della Lega Araba Al Cairo," *Oriente Moderno* 36, no. 4 (1956): 221.



took place in Cairo under the auspices of the Arab League. The attendants decided to conduct an international propaganda campaign designed to push back “*misleading Zionist propaganda*.”<sup>1003</sup> For this purpose, the congress resolved to set up the fund for the financing of Arab propaganda in foreign countries and to establish propaganda offices in another sixteen countries in addition to the four already existing in New York, Buenos Aires, Geneva and Karachi, which were also to be strengthened. The recently established Arab Information Office in Geneva was also selected to be the center for Arab propaganda activities in Europe.<sup>1004</sup> For the purpose of combating Israeli activities in South Asia, the opening of an Arab League office in New Delhi was agreed on in 1960.<sup>1005</sup> During its session in Cairo in December 1964, the Arab League decided to establish Offices in Far-Eastern and African capitals. This was a response to increased Israeli activities in Africa, mostly in the form of exchange programs and economic aid. Another means of spreading support for Arab viewpoints was the establishment of Arab friendship societies in these strategic regions. This also followed central planning. Thus, at the same session in December 1964, the UAR embassy in Japan and its attached information center were commissioned to help establish an Arab-Japanese Society.<sup>1006</sup> In 1965, the Arab League decided to open an Arab League Office at the European Economic Community in Brussels, which was inaugurated one year later.<sup>1007</sup> By 1966, the Arab League had established a world-wide propaganda network.

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<sup>1003</sup> Zamil, “The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States,” 70.

<sup>1004</sup> “Letter by the Chargé d’affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Egypt,” November 15, 1957, CH-BAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388\*.

<sup>1005</sup> Virginia Vacca, “Prossima Apertura Di Un Ufficio Della Lega Araba in India,” *Oriente Moderno* 40, no. 11/12 (1960): 666.

<sup>1006</sup> BRD Botschaft Kairo, “Betr. der Sitzung im Rahmen der 42. ordentlichen Tagung des Rats der Arabischen Liga” January 7, 1965, PA AA B36.289; Robert W. MACDONALD, *The League of Arab States. A Study in the Dynamics of Regional Organization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 137–38.

<sup>1007</sup> A. F., “Ufficio Della Lega Araba Presso La CEE,” *Oriente Moderno* 45, no. 2 (1965): 53.

Figure 1: The foreign offices of the Arab League<sup>1008</sup>

Location	Year of establishment
New York	1955
Bonn, Rio de Janeiro	1956
Chicago, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Geneva	1957
Washington	1958
Dallas	1960
Coral Gables (closed in 1964), London, Rome, New Delhi	1961
Ottawa	1965
Paris, Tokyo, Nairobi, Dakar, Lagos, Madrid, Brussels, Santiago de Chile	1966

The international propaganda was organized in a coordinated way through a sophisticated and hierarchical bureaucracy. First, there was the Department for Information and Publication, which went through several renamings and was later known as the Board of Information. It determined the plan of action for the offices and their respective budgets. The Department for Information and Publication reported to the Arab League Secretary General and was headed by one of his assistants. This prominent status within the Arab League's bureaucracy indicates that public diplomacy was considered a field of the utmost importance. The Department for Information and Publication had three central tasks: First, strategic planning in consideration of the recommendations and resolutions of the superior bodies of the Arab League. Second, the production and distribution of propaganda material, including the organization of events and exhibitions, and third, the supervision of the Arab League Offices.<sup>1009</sup> Besides the Department for Information and Publication, the Arab League put several strategic instruments in place to coordinate the propaganda effort. In 1959, the Permanent Committee on Information was formed, which consisted of the heads of the

<sup>1008</sup> Sinno, 258

<sup>1009</sup> Abdallah-Sinno, *Le Rôle de l'information de La Ligue Des États Arabes*, 130–35, 280, 294–95.

Arab Offices and met twice a year. Its work was supported by the staff of the Permanent Bureau of Arab Propaganda. Since 1964, the Permanent Committee on Information reported to the Council of Arab Ministers of Information, a body which had been formed in the same year and oversaw the strategic planning of propaganda. Yearly conferences of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information determined the broader strategy of Arab League propaganda. The first conference of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information took place in Cairo on March 7-10, 1964. The conference resolutions determined several themes of Arab propaganda that were primarily concerned with Israel. The resolutions characterized Israel as an expansionist, aggressive country, which was acting as an agent of Imperialism. It had expelled the Arabs and discriminated against them. Therefore, armed struggle by Palestinian paramilitary and terrorist organizations was justified. The Arab states supported the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and their fight to establish a Palestinian nation state. Other resolutions claimed that anti-Semitism was solely a Western and not an Arab phenomenon. Moreover, the Zionists had deliberately tainted the image of the Arabs in the West. There was therefore a need to improve the image of Islam and the Arabs in the West.<sup>1010</sup> These were the themes of Arab propaganda in the following years.

The Arab embassies were also involved in propaganda work. One constant concern of the Arab League was therefore the improvement of coordination between the Arab Offices and the Arab embassies to achieve tangible results. Arab League resolutions repeatedly stressed this aim. The 1964 conference of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information again urged Arab diplomats *“to cooperate with the League’s offices in administering information activities; to contact public opinion leaders, including members of political parties, mass organizations, unions, professors, students, as well as financial circles that have interests in the Middle East; to support and encourage the Organization of Arab Students; and to encourage community civic and religious leaders, as well as those who help form public opinion (e.g., journalists), to visit the*

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<sup>1010</sup> Zamil, “The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States,” 65–74; Suleiman, “The Arab Information Effort in North America,” 268–70.

*Arab world.*<sup>1011</sup> Monthly meetings between the Arab diplomats and the Arab Office directors were set up to help facilitate this coordination. They had the negative effect that they also increased the already considerable burden of bureaucracy.<sup>1012</sup> There was a constant tendency to shift responsibilities to the management level and limit the freedom of action of the Arab Office staff. It is therefore not too surprising that the staff at the Arab League Offices often complained about the inefficiency and lack of independence.<sup>1013</sup>

The activities of the Arab Offices were also clearly delineated in accordance with Resolution 17 of the Secretary General from 1966. Resolution 17 recommended five principal fields of Arab Office activity: Lobbying by maintaining contact with parties and their leaders; maintaining a presence in the media through written publications, press conferences and the participation in radio and television broadcasts; exhibiting Arab cultural achievements through the presentation of Arab television broadcasts and movies, and the organization of cultural exhibitions and religious events; Strengthening the pro-Arab community by capitalizing on the capabilities of the Arab emigrant community, foremost Arab university students, and sympathizers; and lastly the organization of delegations of parliamentarians, professionals, journalists and youth to the Arab states.<sup>1014</sup> Another activity which was not covered by Resolution 17, was the promotion of Arab national movements recognized by all the states of the Arab League by allowing their representatives to work at the Arab League Offices in attached positions, first that of the FLN and later that of the PLO.<sup>1015</sup> The Arab League propaganda apparatus was financed through the budget for the General Secretariat and through the Joint Arab Information Fund. The fund had been set up in 1960 but

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<sup>1011</sup> Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States," 83.

<sup>1012</sup> Ibid., 82–84.

<sup>1013</sup> Abdallah-Sinno, *Le Rôle de l'information de La Ligue Des États Arabes*, 130–35, 280, 294–95.

<sup>1014</sup> Ibid., 259–61.

<sup>1015</sup> Boutros-Ghali, B. (1968). *La crise de la Ligue Arabe*. *Annuaire français de droit international*, 14(1), 115

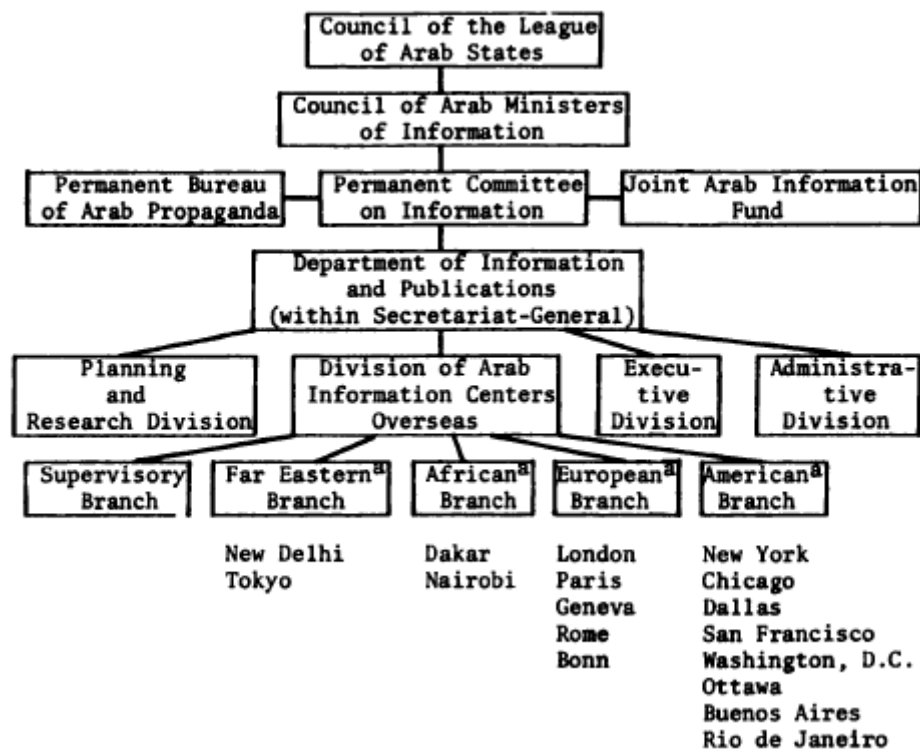
only received significant donations from Arab League member states after 1967, when the Arab Gulf sheiks donated \$300'000. Through the 1960s, the budget of the Department for Information and Publication grew disproportionally in comparison with the general budget. While in 1963, it made up 25 percent of the general budget, it averaged 45 percent in the second half of the decade.<sup>1016</sup> The Department for Information and Publication was headed by Zoher Kabbani, the former head of the Arab League Geneva Office, since 1964.<sup>1017</sup> The increase in the propaganda budget reflected the fact that the Arab states considered the information area a vital battlefield in their escalation of the conflict with Israel. After 1964, inter-Arab rivalry diminished, allowing for a strengthening of military and political cooperation among the Arab states against Israel, a development which culminated in the Six-Day War.

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<sup>1016</sup> Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States," 88–94.

<sup>1017</sup> "Neue Büros der Arabischen Liga," *Arabische Korrespondenz* 8, no. 12/13 (August 15, 1964): 6.

Figure 1: Organizational structure of the Arab League propaganda apparatus<sup>1018</sup>



## 6.2 The Re-Establishment of the Arab League Propaganda Network in the US and the Native anti-Zionist Network

Before analyzing the role of the Arab League in the US in the 1950s, it is worthwhile to take a look at the developments within the anti-Zionist scene in the US since Israel's establishment in May 1948. With the closure of the Arab Office in Washington in 1948 and the disbanding of the IAAA in 1950, the anti-Zionist movement lost its two main organizations. However, the Protestant and missionary circles opposed to Zionism and the newly established state of Israel quickly resumed their activities, establishing the short-lived Holy Land Christian Committee in 1949 with the stated purpose of helping the Christians in Palestine. It represented an ideological continuation of the missionary anti-Zionist Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land, which had been active in the first half of 1948 in their efforts to turn back American support for partition, as

<sup>1018</sup> Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States," 69.

discussed above. Like its predecessor, the Holy Land Christian Committee had close connections to the State Department, but also to the CIA, with future CIA director, Allen Dulles, and CIA officer, William 'Billy' Eddy, who also worked as a consultant for Aramco, among its members.<sup>1019</sup> The committee was chaired by James Shepherd Freeman, a Navy admiral, and the Palestinian Christian, Yusif Bandak, who presented himself as a Christian delegate from Bethlehem, and worked as the committee's roving ambassador. Bandak was the son of Issa Bandak, the mayor of Bethlehem. During the war, he was in London, where he worked for the BBC and as the Arab liaison for the anti-Zionist Anglo-Arab Association. Bandak toured Christian parishes, being especially active in California. His activities worried the pro-Zionist American Christian Palestine Committee led by Karl Baehr, who warned of him in a circular letter. According to the letter, the controversial, anti-fascist journalist, Walter Winchell, had allegedly discovered several disconcerting facts about Bandak. He was a follower of the ex-Mufti, who had been active in the paramilitary Arab underground in Palestine and had been in British custody for some time. He had also written an anti-Semitic and anti-American article in the February 15, 1946 issue of the newspaper *Sawt ash-Shaab*. Through the support of British anti-Zionists, he received a visa to the USA in 1948, which had initially been denied. There, he consorted among others with the anti-Semitic politician, Merwin K. Hart. The letter accused Bandak of double speech: *"In his contacts with the Arabs as well as with Americans of the Merwin K. Hart type, he is violently anti-Semitic, whereas in his presentation to American Catholics and Protestants, he is idealistically religious."*<sup>1020</sup> According to Reverend William Lindsay Young, the vice-president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, who attended a meeting on September 3, 1950 in Los Angeles, Bandak's message concentrated on inveighing against Israel: *"I heard no discussion of ways and means to help the unfortunate Christians in Bethlehem, the avowed purpose of Bandak's organization."* Among the audience was also Gerald K. Smith, a well-known anti-

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<sup>1019</sup> Asaf Romirowsky and Alexander H. Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 134–35.

<sup>1020</sup> American Christian Palestine Committee and Karl Baehr, "Memorandum on Yusif El-Bandak" December 12, 1949, ANLP 248.12.

Semitic activist.<sup>1021</sup> The Holy Land Christian Committee however shared the short life span of the Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land. It seems to have ceased its activity after 1950, soon to be replaced by an organization with much firmer grounding.

The leading pro-Arab organization in the 1950s in the US was the American Friends of the Middle East (AFME), which had a similar Protestant, missionary pedigree. In November 1949, the Arabist, Kermit Roosevelt, who had headed the Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land together with Virginia Gildersleeve, assumed the post of deputy chief of the Near East and Africa Division (NEA) in the State Department. Roosevelt used his influence to promote the Arab cause in the US. At first, he sought to provide his friend Elmer Berger of the anti-Zionist ACJ with a job in Washington. In January 1951, Berger started to work as a consultant for the CIA. Elmer Berger and Dorothy Thompson, a prominent American journalist who had originally been sympathetic to Zionism but had become increasingly critical of it in the late 1940s and had started to frequent the anti-Zionist circles of the ACJ, were instrumental in the establishment of the AFME. In March 1951, both met with Kermit Roosevelt and CIA officers in Washington. On May 15, 1951, the AFME was established in New York. The organization made little progress until October 1951, when the CIA assigned a case officer to it. The case officer, a certain Mather Greenleaf Eliot, put the AFME on a more professional basis and recruited the services of experienced anti-Zionist activists, like Garland Evans Hopkins. Through several front organizations, the CIA provided the AFME with ample funding. In 1957, the AFME reported assets of about 1.5 million dollars. Under the professional management of Garland Hopkins who ran the organization despite acting only as its vice president, the AFME quickly expanded. It set up branch offices in the whole country and since 1953 also in the Middle East. The AFME consisted of four departments: Intercultural Relations, Research and Publications, Public Relations, and Student Affairs. The AFME was active in a range of cultural and informational activities. One of its main focuses was the establishment of exchange programs for Middle Eastern students and the support of Arab students in the US. AFME messaging emphasized the common bond between the Middle East and the US as well as between Christianity and Islam. Anti-Zionism stood not at the

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<sup>1021</sup> Carlson, *Cairo to Damascus*, 471–73.



center of its message, but inherent to its agenda. Israel and Judaism were absent from its vision of the Middle East and there were often references to “*special interests*”, which were manipulating US foreign policy.<sup>1022</sup>

The establishment of the AFME signaled a pro-Arab turn in the US foreign policy, which became manifest under President Eisenhower, whose administration sought to correct the Truman foreign policy that it perceived as having been too pro-Zionist. State support for the AFME can also be understood as part of the growing importance of public diplomacy as a tool of US foreign policy in the late Truman and the Eisenhower administration. Truman’s Campaign of Truth program had already extended propaganda activities abroad. Under Eisenhower, the International Information Administration (IIA) was established in 1952. It was replaced by the US Information Agency (USIA) one year later, which, working under the authority of the State Department, was to coordinate US propaganda activities.<sup>1023</sup> The major goal of US foreign policy in the Middle East remained the prevention of Communist penetration of the region. US foreign policy makers considered Islam and Arab nationalism as powerful allies against communism and therefore sought to co-opt them. They were however worried by neutralist tendencies in the region, like that advocated by Nasser. The State Department maintained its generally hostile attitude to Israel, considering past US support for partition still as the main stumbling block for the image of the US in the Middle East.<sup>1024</sup> US information policy therefore sought to foster a climate of friendship between the US and the Arab and Islamic countries. IIA chief, Reed Harris, announced the creation of a Working Group on Special Materials for Arab and other Moslem Countries on March 14, 1952 in a letter to several public diplomacy officials.

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<sup>1022</sup> Wilford, *America’s Great Game*, 115–24.

<sup>1023</sup> Ahmed Khalid Al-Rawi, “The Campaign of Truth Program: US Propaganda in Iraq during the Early 1950s,” in *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 114. Via Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 22–23.

<sup>1024</sup> Al-Rawi, “The Campaign of Truth Program: US Propaganda in Iraq during the Early 1950s,” 122–23.

The working group assembled both public diplomacy and Middle East experts from several branches of the State Department. The program proposal that was attached to the letter, observed “*that the West is considered by most Arabs to be a more immediate and dangerous threat than Communism or the Soviet Union.*”<sup>1025</sup> The blame for this hostile climate towards the West in the Middle East, which was considered a “*great threat to United States interests*”, fell also on the West itself, the program analyzed: “*A deep seated [Arab] inferiority complex, for which the traditional attitude of the West towards the Middle East must bear a heavy share of responsibility, further complicates the situation.*”<sup>1026</sup> The group was designed to “*direct a program for countering mistrust of the United States*” in order to remedy this precarious situation.<sup>1027</sup> The program proposal however emphasized that US information policy could not hope to succeed in convincing the Arabs that the US was not pursuing a self-interested policy in the Middle East. Instead, the IIA would strive to create the impression that it had a genuine and sympathetic interest in Islam and the Arabs. To this end, the IIA would advertise the range of scholarly, educational and cultural engagement with the region and Islam within the United States. This was evidenced by the abundance of language courses, research, even textbooks and children books dealing with these topics. The project proposal drafted a list of 18 smaller projects, which were scheduled to be discussed on the founding meeting on March 25, 1952. The list suggests that although US information policy was designed to help US foreign policy, most projects were directed at a domestic audience, seeking to gain understanding and sympathy for the Arab countries and Islam.<sup>1028</sup> State support for the AFME must be understood in this context as one measure of a general US information program.

In the early 1950s, alongside the state-sponsored AFME, the Arab League and the AHC also sought to rebuild their propaganda network in the US, which had become dysfunctional in early 1948. They seem to have enjoyed some support from pro-Arab

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<sup>1025</sup> Reed Haaris, “Memo: Working Group on Special Materials for Arab and Other Moslem Countries,” March 14, 1952, RG 59, NACP.

<sup>1026</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1027</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1028</sup> Ibid.

American far-right activists in this endeavor. According to research by the ADL, the American advertiser and far-right activist Allen Zoll approached Omar Haliq in summer 1952 with the offer of publishing Arab propaganda material. On November 14, 1952, he had a meeting with Arab League general secretary Abdul Khalek Hassouna and several high-ranking Arab officials at the UN. He advised them that president elect Dwight Eisenhower would pursue a more pro-Arab foreign policy and that it was therefore the right moment to open a propaganda office in the US to fight Jewish influence there. Simultaneously, he offered to work for this new office. After receiving information on Zoll's questionable character, Hassouna seems not to have pursued Zoll's job offer any further. Still, the Egyptian foreign ministry extended an invitation to Zoll to visit Egypt. During Zoll's stay in Egypt in 1953, he met with several notable figures, including the ex-Mufti, and advertised foreign investments in the country during a press conference.<sup>1029</sup> Far-right activists continued to seek the proximity of the Arab propagandists in the US during the 1950s, occasionally discomforting the latter, as will be discussed below.

Izzat Tannous, a veteran of the AHC, which had lost much of its influence after the Israeli war of independence, also resumed his propaganda activities in the US. Izzat Tannous had served as a foreign spokesperson and propagandist for the AHC in Britain and the US since the 1930s. After the first Arab-Israeli War, he remained in the camp of the ex-Mufti, using the latter's funds to build the AHC's Arab Palestine Office in Beirut. According to the CIA, the ex-Mufti however felt challenged by Tannous' self-proclaimed title of "*spokesman for the refugees*" and sought to undermine his position.<sup>1030</sup> The ex-Mufti alleged that Tannous was paid by British and American money through the intermediary of the Iraqis.<sup>1031</sup> In his function at the Beirut Arab Palestine Office, Tannous produced the first, albeit excessive, estimates of the

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<sup>1029</sup> Arnold Forster Epstein Benjamin R., *Cross-Currents*, 1956, 314–18.

<sup>1030</sup> US Embassy Beirut, "Machinations of the Mufti" December 1, 1953, CIA Electronic Reading Room, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/HUSSEINI,%20AMIN%20EL%20%20%20VOL.5\\_0186.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/HUSSEINI,%20AMIN%20EL%20%20%20VOL.5_0186.pdf).

<sup>1031</sup> Ibid.

possessions that Arab refugees had left behind when they fled Palestine.<sup>1032</sup> Perhaps because of the tensions with the ex-Mufti, Tannous left for the US in 1954, there establishing the Palestine Arab Refugee Office in New York.<sup>1033</sup> The body advocated the interests of the Arab Palestinian refugees at the UN and also engaged in public campaigning. The propaganda material published in the years 1955 until 1960 focused on criticizing the Zionist ideology, Arab dispossession and Israeli policies towards its Arab population. The fate of Arab Palestinian refugees in other countries was not discussed and compassion for the refugees was primarily used as a means to undermine sympathy for Israel. Most of the booklets were authored by Izzat Tannous and Sami Hadawi, who had worked as an expert on Arab land ownership for the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine until 1956.<sup>1034</sup>

The leading spokesman for the Arab Cause in the 1950s, however, was Fayez Sayegh. In 1959, he claimed to have lectured on about 150 campuses and to have appeared on more than 200 radio and television shows.<sup>1035</sup> The accuracy of these numbers notwithstanding, Sayegh certainly was highly productive. In addition to his speaking engagements, Sayegh also authored dozens of books and articles. Sayegh, who was born in 1922 in Syria, was the scion of a prominent Protestant family, which had settled in Palestine during the British mandate period. He was a graduate of AUB and Georgetown.<sup>1036</sup> Fayez and his older brother Yusif had been active in leading positions in the Palestine branch of Antoun Saadeh's Syrian Socialist National Party (PPS) during the 1940s, with Fayez chairing the Culture and Propaganda Committee. The party sought to spread Saadeh's pan-Syrian ideology. By the 1940s, Pan-Syrianism

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<sup>1032</sup> Michael R. Fischbach, *Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Columbia University Press, 2012), 215–17.

<sup>1033</sup> Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, 393.

<sup>1034</sup> *Ibid.*, 155–56.

<sup>1035</sup> "The Executives' Club of Chicago Urges You to Hear Dr. Fayez Sayegh Counselor, Arab States Delegations, 'Arab Nationalism and the West'" September 18, 1959, FSAC Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 4, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1036</sup> Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, 359.

had by now lost the popularity it had enjoyed in Palestine twenty years before and the party apparently met little success, as recounted by Yusif: “*There was not a great deal of readiness to accept the ideas of the PPS because it emphasized the Syrianness of Palestine; that Palestine was Southern Syria. The Palestinians always call themselves ‘Arabs’, and they thought of the Palestine problem as an Arab problem rather than a Syrian problem.*”<sup>1037</sup> In late 1947, the PPS organized military training for its members and was involved in military action against the Yishuv. During the conflict, Fayez’s brother Yusif became a prisoner of war.<sup>1038</sup> It is possible that Fayez was involved in military action as well, although he did not mention this in his later career. In the late 1940s, Fayez moved to the US to work with the Lebanese diplomat, Charles Malik. Cecil Hourani, who collaborated with Fayez in 1949 at the UN for the Lebanese delegation, described him in ambivalent terms, having “*an encyclopedic knowledge of every phase of the problems, and a sharp logical mind, but also a streak of intransigence and bitterness which with time, and frustration as the faith he had put in the capacity or the willingness of the Arab regimes to solve the Palestinian question in the way he wanted faded away, overshadowed his other more human qualities.*”<sup>1039</sup>

As a member of the Lebanese legation, Sayegh networked with the existing anti-Zionist advocacy network. In 1952, he published the booklet ‘The Palestine Refugees’ as a response to a memorandum. The AFME’s Department of Research and Publication, which was headed by the AUB graduate and missionary of German origin Erich Bethmann, published its own version of the pamphlet, with AFME board members Virginia Gildersleeve and William Hocking writing a preface.<sup>1040</sup> The pamphlet was widely distributed and reprinted. The printing costs for 5’000 copies of the second

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<sup>1037</sup> Yusif Sayegh, “Desperately Nationalist, Yusif Sayigh, 1944 to 1948,” ed. Rosemary Sayigh, *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 28 (2006): 66.

<sup>1038</sup> *Ibid.*, 66–69.

<sup>1039</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 77.

<sup>1040</sup> AFME, “American Friends of the Middle East Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Vice President: 1951-1952,” 1952, 11–12, Middle East, <http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=19076>; Fayez A Sayegh, *The Palestine Refugees* (Washington: AMARA Press, 1952).

edition and their distribution were funded by a wealthy Lebanese businessman and a group of Lebanese supporters.<sup>1041</sup> The booklet was part insightful academic treatise on the situation of the Arab refugees from Palestine, and part pamphlet against Zionism. Among the more controversial things, the pamphlet claimed that the Zionist movement, including moderate leaders like Chaim Weizmann, had always been bent on the destruction and expulsion of the Arab community in Palestine. It claimed: “*The grand strategy of Zionism—which follows inevitably from the ultimate objectives thereof—involves the dispossession of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine.*”<sup>1042</sup> This was a caricature of Zionism which ignored the complex history of Zionist thought on the Palestinian Arabs. In fact, the traditional approach of the Zionists, including Theodor Herzl, was marked by the somewhat naïve conviction that the local Arabs, as equal citizens, would embrace Zionism after realizing the economic benefits and general progress it brought to Palestine. This was how the literary figure Rashid Bey described the effects of Zionism in Herzl’s novel ‘*Altneuland*’.<sup>1043</sup> In fact, even Vladimir Jabotinsky, the leader of the more militant Revisionist Zionists, had favored an understanding with the local Arabs and continued to reject their resettlement during the discussion on the Peel partition plan in 1937.<sup>1044</sup> Sayegh also raised doubts about whether Jews in the Arab countries had suffered discrimination and violence after the establishment of Israel.<sup>1045</sup> A private letter suggests that Sayegh was also not entirely free from anti-Jewish prejudice. In a letter from 1952, Fayeze Sayegh considered cheating his employer by declaring that he was currently staying in Lebanon and not in Washington. This way, he could spend a few weeks’ vacation in Beirut, with his employer paying for his trip back to the States from Lebanon. “*Why not out-Jew the*

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<sup>1041</sup> Fayeze A. Sayegh, “Letter to Aida Fahoum,” March 15, 1952, FSAC Mid001 Bx 293 Fd 5, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1042</sup> Sayegh, *The Palestine Refugees*, 6.

<sup>1043</sup> Shlomo Avineri, *Herzl: Theodor Herzl und die Gründung des jüdischen Staates* (Suhrkamp Verlag, 2016), 248–49.

<sup>1044</sup> Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2014), 203.

<sup>1045</sup> Sayegh, *The Palestine Refugees*, 28–32.

*Jew?*", he asked rhetorically.<sup>1046</sup> Although certainly a gifted scholar, Sayegh's sense of mission and his prejudices affected his work.

Although the responses to the brochure were mixed, it successfully established Sayegh's claim as the leading Arab propagandist in the US. Among the brochure's critics was the liberal journalist Freda Kirchway. In a letter to Gildersleeve, she expressed the view that the brochure showed a lack of compassion for the Arab refugees and offered no solution for their plight. Resettling them in Israel would lead to the destruction of Israel and therefore to war.<sup>1047</sup> The anti-Zionist Jewish activist Elmer Berger of the ACJ however wrote to Sayegh to congratulate him for his "*brilliant and compelling*" booklet on the Arab refugees from Palestine and suggested a meeting.<sup>1048</sup> It was the beginning of an enduring and rewarding collaboration between the men. Both men pursued distinct interests. The ACJ had helped gentile anti-Zionists since its founding to shield themselves from accusations of anti-Semitism. Berger sought the proximity of the Arabs in the US, appearing for instance at the conference of the Arab Students. Sayegh on the other hand was convinced that the Jewish anti-Zionist position was of special interest to the Arabs. He therefore quoted from Berger's works in his Arabic writings and sought to familiarize the Arabic world with the work of the ACJ, as he told Berger in 1954.<sup>1049</sup> Through the mediation of Berger, Sayegh was also afforded a chance to get an article published in the anti-Zionist Jewish journal *Menorah*.<sup>1050</sup> Berger was so enthusiastic about the article that he had the draft

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<sup>1046</sup> Sayegh, "Letter to Aida Fahoum."

<sup>1047</sup> Freda Kirchway, "Letter to Virginia Gildersleeve," March 19, 1952, FASC Mid001 Bx 293 Fd 5, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1048</sup> Elmer Berger, "Letter to Fayez A. Sayegh," March 13, 1952, FSAC Mid001 Bx 293 Fd 5, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845388>; Fayez A. Sayegh, "Letter to Elmer Berger," March 14, 1952, FSAC Mid001 Bx 293 Fd 5, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845388>.

<sup>1049</sup> Fayez A. Sayegh, "Letter to Elmer Berger," November 6, 1954, FSAC Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 8, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845388>.

<sup>1050</sup> Elmer Berger, "Letter to Fayez A. Sayegh," December 10, 1954, FSAC Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 8, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

distributed to his colleagues, including ACJ president Lessing Rosenwald, who responded similarly.<sup>1051</sup> Through the collaboration with gentile anti-Zionists, Berger and the ACJ could escape their increasingly isolated position within the American Jewish community and increase their influence beyond their numbers.

Arab League plans to establish an Arab Office in the US had progressed substantially in the meantime. On February 17, 1955, the State Department consented to the plans of former Egyptian ambassador Kamil Abdul Rahim to establish an Arab Information Office in New York, which would combine the information activities of the different Arab missions at the UN. From the State Department's understanding, the new Office would be mainly concerned with work at the UN.<sup>1052</sup> In late 1954 or early 1955, Egyptian ambassador to the US Karim Rahim offered Fayez Sayegh a job as chief of research at the new Arab States Delegations Office. At the time, Sayegh was on a lecturing tour in the Middle East, where he had suffered a minor heart attack.<sup>1053</sup> Besides his academic background and work experience, Sayegh's good relations with US anti-Zionists, in particular from the AFME, qualified him for the job. He seems therefore to have also fulfilled the function of a liaison officer for the Arab States Delegations Office. In 1956 for instance, when Sayegh was preparing a pamphlet titled 'Questions and Answers on the Arab-Israeli Conflict', he solicited the opinion of the AFME on his project proposal.<sup>1054</sup> The AFME supported the project, wishing to use Sayegh's

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<sup>1051</sup> Elmer Berger, "Letter to Fayez A. Sayegh," December 28, 1954, FSAC Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 8, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1052</sup> Mr. Dorsey and Office of Near Eastern Affairs, "Memorandum on Arab Information" April 5, 1947, NARA RG 59, entry 1301 box 41.

<sup>1053</sup> Fayez A. Sayegh, "Letter to Elmer Berger," January 17, 1955, FSAC Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 8, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845388>.

<sup>1054</sup> "Letter from Fayez A. Sayegh to Friends on 'Question and Answers,'" April 6, 1956, FSAC Mid001 Bx 293 Fd 5, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845361>.



pamphlet as a handbook for students and speakers, which could be used in discussion groups.<sup>1055</sup> Sayegh continued to stay in touch with the AFME.

In January 1955, the ADL alleged that the new Arab Information Office was consorting with well-known anti-Semites. The accusations were based on an exchange of letters between Omar Haliq, the alternative representative of the Saudi Delegation, and Kamil Rahim, which the ADL had received. In the exchange, Omar Haliq reported that members of the AFME had advised against working with the far-right. However, he contended that the Arab League should not follow this advice, because the interests of the far-right and those of the Arabs were overlapping. Still, he recommended to Rahim to collaborate with anti-Semitic activists in the US only in secret to minimize the risk of public exposure. Rahim consented.<sup>1056</sup> How credible were these allegations? In a letter to the State Department, Rahim declared that he had never been in touch with Haliq, nor had the intention of knowingly working with anti-Semites. On the contrary, he accused his detractors of equating “*a pro-Arab position or any criticism of Israel with ‘anti-Semitism’.*”<sup>1057</sup> Rahim’s assertions that he did not know Haliq were not credible. Moreover, Rahim did not avoid the company of Haliq after the accusations had been leveled. Thus, Omar Haliq, Fayez Sayegh and Kamil Abdul Rahim were among the speakers of the AFME annual conference in January 1956.<sup>1058</sup> Nor was Haliq unknown to the Arab League. As mentioned earlier, in 1947, when Haliq was working for the Institute of Arab American Affairs, the Arab League had tasked him with designing a

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<sup>1055</sup> William Archer Wright Jr., “Letter to Fayez A. Sayegh,” May 25, 1956, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 5, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845388>.

<sup>1056</sup> ADL, “New Arab League Center,” *Facts* 10, no. 1 (January 1955): 39.

<sup>1057</sup> Kamil Abdul Rahim, “To Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., USUN,” March 23, 1955, NARA RG 59, entry 1301 box 41.

<sup>1058</sup> AFME, “American Friends of the Middle East Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Vice President: 1955-1956,” 1956, 13, Middle East, <http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=19076>; “American Friends of the Middle East Annual Report: 1959-1960,” *American Friends of the Middle East Annual Report*, January 1, 1960, 19, <http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=19080>.

strategy for the partition vote at the UN. Then, Haliq had suggested to co-opt anti-Semitism in Latin American countries to gain the necessary votes.<sup>1059</sup> It was therefore not altogether surprising that he would advise the same strategy in 1955. Nor was the US exceptional in this regard. The Arab League representatives in Switzerland and Germany also consorted with the far-right. Lastly, files from the FBI confirm that extreme rightists sought to collaborate with the Arab League. All this suggests that the exchange of letters between Haliq and Rahim was authentic.

Still, accusations of anti-Semitism were not likely to bother the State Department. The dual character of the Arab States Delegation Office as both a research center for the Arab missions at the UN and as a foreign agent conducting propaganda in the US however presented problems for it. UN employees enjoyed diplomatic status while foreign agents did not.<sup>1060</sup> Moreover, in an interview with the *New York Times*, Rahim had asserted that the Arab States Delegation Office would strive *“to deepen understanding between American and Arab peoples and to further their common interests.”*<sup>1061</sup> The State Department felt that even this innocuous statement overstepped the terms for the opening of the Arab States Delegation Office agreed on in February, because it made clear that Rahim intended to engage in public activity. The US Mission to the UN also raised concerns about the public activities of the new office. It was however assured by the State Department *“that a large portion of the employees’ duties would be devoted to research and writing in connection with presentation of the Arab cause before the UN.”*<sup>1062</sup> Unconvinced by its own declarations however, the State Department pressed the Arab League to disassociate work for the UN and public diplomacy and sought to gain assurances from the Arab

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<sup>1059</sup> Haliq and Jewish Agency, “‘Palestinian Delegate’ in New York to the Higher Arab Committee and the Arab League.”

<sup>1060</sup> Mr. Dorsey and Office of Near Eastern Affairs, “Memorandum on Arab Infomation.”

<sup>1061</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1062</sup> Ibid.

League in this direction..<sup>1063</sup> As a result, the propaganda of the Arab States Delegations Office was published under the name of the Arab Information Center.

Like in Germany, sympathy among the ranks of the American far-right for Egypt and Arab nationalism ran strong. The anti-Semitic activist, Gerald L. K. Smith, who reported to have been received by the Egyptian ambassador in 1954, remarked admiringly: *"There are Jews in Egypt, but the Jews are not running Egypt."*<sup>1064</sup> Smith was not free from self-interest. Thus, he offered the pages of his magazine *The Cross and the Flag* to Arab propaganda against payment. Izzat Tannous submitted one article. The writings of the anti-communist Jack B. Tenney, a collaborator of Gerald K. Smith, who accused the Zionists of seeking world domination, were also promoted by the Arab League and Arab diplomats located in the US. His conspiratorial and anti-Semitic book *'Zionist Network'* was allegedly bought by the Arab League for distribution in the US and in the Middle East.<sup>1065</sup> It is not difficult to see the reason for his appeal. Tenney paradoxically argued that Israel was destined to be destroyed by its Arab neighbors and that the Zionists were on their way to world domination: *"Israel, as a state, is a forlorn hope in any event. Wrested from the Arabs by chicanery and violence. It will again be conquered and reconquered. Like an ant hill in the center of a great intersection It must be trampled by the restless hordes that move to and fro in a seething world. The Great Design of its network centers in the United Nation and World Government. Its continued existence depends on its 'back-stair' diplomats, and its hope for dominance is geared to the rapid decline and destruction of Western Christian civilization."*<sup>1066</sup> This was a confirmation of the worldview held by many anti-Zionist agitators; that they were the underdogs who fought against immense powers, but who would ultimately prevail.

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<sup>1063</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1064</sup> Epstein, *Cross-Currents*, 352.

<sup>1065</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>1066</sup> Jack Tenney, *Zionist Network* (Los Angeles: Sons of Liberty, 1953), 86, <http://archive.org/details/ZionistNetworkByJackTenney>.

James Madole, the head of the racist and anti-Semitic National Renaissance Party (NRP), was another prominent figure of the far-right who sought to work with the Arabs. The NRP's ideology was similar to that of Liberation Nationalism in Germany. The NRP identified with Nasser and the Arab nationalism against the Jewish state. It also sympathized with the Soviet Union because of its turn towards nationalism and its liquidation of the "*Jewish Bolshevik' leadership*".<sup>1067</sup> Madole distributed and sold pro-Arab and anti-Zionist literature, which he had collected during a visit at the newly opened Arab Information Office and the Egyptian Consulate in New York in early 1955. The literature included the controversial 'The Zionist Espionage in Egypt', 'Questions to a Moslem', 'The Christian Legacy in Egypt' and the 'Egyptian Revolution' by Gamal Nasser. Abdul Mawgoud Hassan, the information officer of the UAR delegation to the UN, also agreed to address a meeting of the National Renaissance Party in June 1955.<sup>1068</sup> Like in Germany, contacts to the Extreme Right eventually boomeranged, weakening the Arab propaganda campaign. In summer 1958, Abdul Mawgoud Hassan, the information officer of the UAR embassy, appeared on the television show *Nightbeat*, where he denied ever having spoken to a gathering of the National Renaissance Party. A picture of the event with Hassan sitting next to Madole was then shown on television, proving his claims to be lies. As a result of the scandal, Abdul Hassan was temporarily recalled to Egypt. Moreover, an article published in 1959 also made Madole's contacts to the Arab diplomats public. The Arab diplomats denied the existence of the contacts, as they had done in the past. Indeed, an investigation by the FBI failed to establish that James Madole was acting as an agent of the Egyptians or the Arab League or was receiving money from them. In an interview with the FBI, Madole confessed that he was purely acting out of pro-Arab sympathy and anti-Jewish conviction.<sup>1069</sup> After all, his National Renaissance Party only had a few hundred supporters and it would have made little sense for the Arab diplomats to employ such

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<sup>1067</sup> Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, Reissue edition (New York London: NYU Press, 2003), 85.

<sup>1068</sup> Epstein, *Cross-Currents*, 359.

<sup>1069</sup> S.B. Donahoe and FBI, "Memorandum on James H. Madole and United Arab Republic" January 29, 1959, FBI FOIA files on James Madole; FBI Office New York, "James Madole" February 27, 1959, FBI FOIA files on James Madole.

a marginal figure in their service. Still, there was a quasi natural attraction between the Arab representatives and the far-right scene.

Opinions on how to deal with local pro-Arab anti-Semites were divided on the Arab side. Rather than following the directives of the Arab League, it was an individual decision. In 1954 and 1955, Izzat Tannous and Omar Haliq consulted both with the mainstream anti-Zionists of the AFME and anti-Semites like Benjamin Freedman, Gerald K. Smith or Allen Zoll on the best strategies to conduct propaganda in the US. They were aware of the importance of keeping these contacts secret, in order – as Izzat Tannous expressed it – to “*avoid accusations by strong Jewish organizations, like the Anti-Defamation League (which is called here the Gestapo of the Jews)*.”<sup>1070</sup> Still, Jewish and Zionist organizations did repeatedly succeed in exposing these connections during the 1950s. This was not without consequence. Tactical, rather than principled, considerations led Rahim and his colleagues to make an effort to keep a greater distance from anti-Semitic activists thereafter. According to an FBI report from 1959, James Madole was by then no longer welcome at the office of the UAR delegation to the UN.<sup>1071</sup> In a 1967 letter to Fayez Sayegh, Benjamin Freedman complained that Rahim had been ignoring his calls for a long time and, as a result, he felt treated unfairly: “*Considering what I did in this fight since 1945, in concert with the United Nations representatives since 1946, and the Washington Embassies of many of them, the indifference of the Arab Office to my existence pained me, but did not deter me in continuing in the fight. However, I felt persona non grata except in the cases like yours.*”<sup>1072</sup> When Freedman pleaded with Arab League General Secretary Abdel Kahlek Hassouna to collaborate with the Arab League Offices, the latter declined, saying: “*We do not want to be regarded as ‘anti-Semitic’.*”<sup>1073</sup> This shunning of the anti-Semitic Right might have been one factor in the tendency of Arab

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<sup>1070</sup> Izzat Tannous, “Letter on Pro-Arab Americans,” February 15, 1955 via; Epstein, *Cross-Currents*, 356–59.

<sup>1071</sup> FBI Office New York, “James Madole.”

<sup>1072</sup> Benjamin H. Freedman, “Letter from Benjamin H. Freedman,” December 4, 1967, FSAC Mid001 Bx 181 Fd 2, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1073</sup> Ibid.

propagandists during the 1960s to progressively look for new allies from the political Left.

In the late 1950s, the amount expended by Arab propaganda in the US constantly increased. In 1957, the Arab Information Office had a budget of \$106'000 and almost double that figure one year later.<sup>1074</sup> A 1960 US government report found that the Arab Information Center had spent \$183'000. The UAR spent an additional \$84'000, mostly for tourist advertisement. Two new branches in Dallas and in Coral Gables were opened in the same year, increasing the number of branch Offices to five. The center was editing several publications, which were received by 26'000 people. In comparison, the report mentioned that Israel had spent \$168'000 for political propaganda and \$212'000 for tourist advertisement in 1960.<sup>1075</sup> Still, the expenses of the Arab Information Office were only a fraction of the Arab propaganda budget in the US. At the Arab Information Congress (Arab. *Mutamarr al-ilam al-arabi*) in Cairo in February 1959, Kamil Abdul Rahim complained that the comprehensive budget of \$600'000 for Arab propaganda in the US was too low, given the amount spent by pro-Israeli propaganda and the geopolitical importance of the US. He further attacked the Jewish organization *Bnai Brith*, which had recently published two booklets on the activities of the Arab League in the US. Rahim also mentioned the numerous associations of Arab students in the US that worked to familiarize the Americans with the Arab view point. He warned that the Zionists wanted these organizations to register as foreign agents, which would have meant their end.<sup>1076</sup> In the late 1950s, the Arab League operated propaganda offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Austin.<sup>1077</sup> In 1960, an Arab Information Center under the leadership of Sami Hadawi, the former head of the Palestine Arab Refugee Office in New York, was opened in

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<sup>1074</sup> Virginia Vacca, "Il Bilancio Del Centro Di Informazioni Arabo Negli Stati Uniti," *Oriente Moderno* 39, no. 8/9 (1959): 591.

<sup>1075</sup> Virginia Vacca, "La Propaganda Araba Negli Stati Uniti, in Una Relazione Del Ministero Della Giustizia Al Congresso," *Oriente Moderno* 41, no. 10/11 (1961): 710.

<sup>1076</sup> Virginia Vacca, "La Propaganda Araba e Quella Israeliana Negli Stati Uniti," *Oriente Moderno* 39, no. 3 (1959): 164–65.

<sup>1077</sup> *Ibid.*

Dallas.<sup>1078</sup> The Arab propaganda strategy in the 1950s still mirrored that employed during the debate over partition. The permanent delegate of Lebanon intimated to the Swiss observer at the UN that the Arabs' information circles put their hopes on "*some republican circles, certain exponents of 'big business', the Aryan upper class and foremost the oil companies.*"<sup>1079</sup> It therefore focused its activities on regions barely populated by Jews, while avoiding those with a sizeable Jewish population like "*Jew York*".<sup>1080</sup>

After years working in public diplomacy, Fayez Sayegh felt the urge to return to academia with a research project under the title 'Survey of Proposals for Peaceful Settlement of the Arab-Israeli Conflict'. He discussed the idea of conducting this research project with the sponsorship of the Council for Foreign Relations or the AFME with his friend Elmer Berger. The latter advised against it, arguing that "*(...) both you and I know enough of the strategy of the Israeli-Zionist operations to realise any such sponsorship will, itself, become the issue, rather than the findings of the research and study.*"<sup>1081</sup> Instead, Elmer Berger suggested to Sayegh that he conduct the project under the auspices of a university and offered to make use of his connections to William Yale at Boston and some contacts at universities in California.<sup>1082</sup> Indeed, after little more than a month, Berger had secured the support of Christina David Harris at Stanford University for the project. Harris was an historian specializing in the Middle

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<sup>1078</sup> American Jewish Committee, "Arab Propaganda in the United States," *For Your Information* 5, no. 8 (August 1960): 1.

<sup>1079</sup> "Report of the Swiss UN observer in New York" February 27, 1957, CH-BAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388\*.

<sup>1080</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1081</sup> Elmer Berger, "Letter to Fayez A. Sayegh," November 9, 1959, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1082</sup> Ibid.

East who had worked for the Division of Near Eastern Affairs after WWII.<sup>1083</sup> She promised that Sayegh would find a sympathetic and congenial working environment at Stanford, as the Political Science Department was “*becoming very Middle-East-minded*.”<sup>1084</sup> Sayegh felt ready to start the project after another lecture tour in the Middle East in 1960. After Stanford agreed to host the project, considering it a possible basis for a future Middle East research center, there was still the question of funding. Stanford demanded that half of the funding for the project be provided by Sayegh.<sup>1085</sup> For this purpose, Sayegh solicited a grant of \$5'000 from the AFME, which he received.<sup>1086</sup> It is one of the ironies of history that the CIA through the AFME thus indirectly contributed to the funding of the career of a future PLO official, as in 1964, Sayegh joined the Executive Committee of the PLO. While his propaganda and academic work in the US has been largely forgotten, Fayez Sayegh's most lasting contribution was certainly the establishment of the Palestine Research Center of the PLO in Beirut in 1965.<sup>1087</sup> Sayegh would stay in the Middle East until his return to the US in 1970.

In 1960, the Arab League propagandists in the US received more precise instructions from the General Secretariat on how to work in the US. Mostly, the instructions

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<sup>1083</sup> “Harris, Christina Phelps (1902–1972) - Middle Eastern History,” accessed September 4, 2017, <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/4645/Harris-Christina-Phelps-1902-1972.html>.

<sup>1084</sup> Christina David Harris, “Letter to Elmer Berger,” December 12, 1959, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1085</sup> Fayez A. Sayegh, “Letter to Elmer Berger,” April 2, 1960, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=845388>.

<sup>1086</sup> Fayez A. Sayegh, “Letter to Harold Minor,” March 24, 1960, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>; Fayez A. Sayegh, “Letter to Harold Minor,” May 2, 1960, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>; Harold Minor, “Letter to Fayez A. Sayegh,” May 10, 1960, FSAC Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=842916>.

<sup>1087</sup> Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, 359.



reflected established practices. They included the recommendation to undermine Israel's existence by arguing that Zionism was based on a false understanding of the Bible. This was essentially what Protestant critics of Zionism had done since the 1920s, as discussed above. Moreover, the Secretariat recommended liaising with different anti-Zionist segments of the US, including anti-Zionist Jews and anti-Zionist organizations and fostering the identification of Arab-Americans with their homelands. The conference of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information, which took place in Cairo in 1964, emphasized another element of Arab propaganda, that of anti-Imperialism. It urged Arab propagandists to expose “*the aggressive, expansionist nature of the Zionist-Israeli existence (...) and its role as imperialist agents in Africa, as well as its alliance with the forces of reaction in the world.*”<sup>1088</sup> Thus, non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Christians and Jews, anti-Imperialist leftists and Arab Americans became the principal target audience for Arab propaganda in the US even before 1967, but that tendency grew even more acute thereafter. When the Six-Day War broke out in June 1967, many Arab diplomats in the US greeted the news with enthusiasm, expecting a rapid Arab victory. When Cecil Hourani met Izzat Tannous of the Arab Palestine Office at the UN premises, the latter told him that this was the “*happiest day*” of his life.<sup>1089</sup> However, Egyptian reports of a military triumph were soon proved to be false and enthusiasm gave way to shock. The Arab states reacted to the military defeat with an intensification of their economic, diplomatic and propagandistic efforts to isolate Israel. At the Arab Information Conference in the Tunisian city of Bizerte in November 1967, the information ministers of the Arab League countries decided to set up a new propaganda fund.<sup>1090</sup> Emulating the discourse on Vietnam, Arab League propaganda stressed that the Palestinians were engaged in a fight for national liberation.

The effects of this shift in targeting and messaging, especially after Bizerte, were soon felt in the US. Jewish activists and organizations were worried about what they

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<sup>1088</sup> Zamil, “The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States,” 113–16.

<sup>1089</sup> Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey*, 91.

<sup>1090</sup> R. R., “Conferenza Dei Ministri Dell'Informazioni Arabi,” *Oriente Moderno* 47, no. 8/12 (1967): 615.

considered to be an intensification of the Arab propaganda effort in the US in the late 1960s. Their activity concentrated on the strongholds of liberal thought in the university and the church.<sup>1091</sup> Suggestions by an American public relations firm to concentrate the Arab League's public diplomacy in the US on the elite, notably on decision makers in politics, business and academia, were rejected by the Arab Information Office.<sup>1092</sup> While the American's PR specialist had suggested greater moderation, Fayez Sayegh, who returned to the US in 1970 to head the Arab Information Office in New York, steered the Arab propaganda in the opposite direction. He authored an internal report on the Arab propaganda strategy in the US. The report posited that the US was basically an enemy country and that all efforts to sway general American public opinion in a pro-Arab direction were therefore fruitless. The only achievable goal was obstruction. Therefore, he proposed mobilizing marginal groups in the American society, including the American New Left, left-wing churches and Black Americans, *"to create and activate in the United States an internal opposition toward the American government's policy in the Middle East. The object of this opposition is first and foremost, to develop obstacles which would deter or delay execution of the American policy favoring Israel."*<sup>1093</sup> Rather than an original proposal, Sayegh's report merely summarized what had become the modus operandi of Arab propaganda in Western

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<sup>1091</sup> See for instance Mel Galun, American Zionist Youth Foundation, and University Service Department, *The New Tone of Arab Propaganda on Campus* (New York, N.Y.: University Service Dept., American Zionist Youth Foundation, 1969); Institute of Human Relations (American Jewish Committee), *Arab Appeals to American Public Opinion Today*. (New York, 1969); Near East report, *A Special Survey: The Arab Propaganda Campaign on the Campus* (Washington D.C.: Near East Report, 1969); see also James H. Sheldon and Zionist Organization of America, *Anti-Israel Forces on the Campus* (New York: Zionist Organization of America, 1966).

<sup>1092</sup> Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States," 118.

<sup>1093</sup> Fayez A. Sayegh, "A Proposal for the Planning of Arab Information in America (Unpublished Report)" (Washington, D.C., 1970), 11 via; Zamil, "The Effectiveness and Credibility of Arab Propaganda in the United States," 120–24.

Europe and the US since the second half of the 1960s. This will be discussed in the following sub-chapters.

### 6.3 The Arab League Office in Geneva, the PLO and the Arab Boycott

Switzerland was the first European country in which the Arab League planned to open an Arab Office. On August 19, 1955, the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Akhbar* reported that the director of the education department of the Arab League had suggested the establishment of an Arab Office in Switzerland. On September 12, 1955, *Al-Akhbar* printed a letter by Kamal El Dine Galal, the former press attaché of the Egyptian legation in Berne. Galal's letter enumerated several factors which made Geneva an important location for the fight against Zionism and therefore an ideal site for the new Arab Office. The Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency had an office in the city, which, as the letter mentioned, had organized the Jewish emigration from Europe to Israel. Moreover, Geneva was just a three-hour ride away from Basel, where the World Zionist Congress had been established in 1897, which, the letter alleged, continued to control Israeli policy. Moreover, according to the letter, the Israelis entertained a liaison office to the ECC in the city. Geneva was just as important in the fight against Zionism as the US, the letter further argued. Whereas American Jews supported Israel openly with the US government, which made it easy for the Arabs to fight them, the Zionist activities in Switzerland remained hidden from the public. They were therefore much more dangerous. We see that Galal ascribed importance to Switzerland both for strategic and historic reasons. Given his erstwhile position at the Egyptian legation, one can assume that his considerations may have juxtaposed those of the Arab League officials. The Israeli foreign ministry assumed that Galal was recommending himself for the position of the head of the new Arab League Office in Geneva by authoring this letter.<sup>1094</sup>

In 1956, a secretary at the Egyptian embassy in Berne approached the Federal Political Department, the Swiss department of foreign affairs, with the Arab League plans to open a propaganda office in Geneva. The Swiss authorities consulted the Americans

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<sup>1094</sup> Israeli Foreign Office, "Opening of an office of the Arab League in Geneva" (Jerusalem, September 21, 1955), ISA HZ 18/3.

to learn how they were dealing with the Arab Office. The Americans replied that they had insisted on a written agreement on the activities of the Arab Office before authorizing its establishment. The Swiss chose to adopt the same procedure.<sup>1095</sup> The Arab League's Geneva Office was eventually opened in 1957, with Zoher Kabbani and not Galal becoming its director. Kabbani served both as the observer of the Arab League and as the permanent Syrian delegate to the UN. To the outside world, the Arab League Office branded itself as the Arab Information Office (Fr. *Centre d'Information Arabe*), claiming to be mainly concerned with tourism and the dissemination of information on the Arab states. Kabbani emphasized this aspect by promising to the Swiss authorities that his office would not engage in propaganda activity.<sup>1096</sup> The Arab Information Office edited two magazines intended for the public: The glossy magazine *Le Monde Arabe* and a bulletin named *Nouvelles du Monde Arabe*. Despite Kabbani's earlier promises, much of its content was political and critical of French policies in Algeria and Israel. They therefore gave constant cause for protest foremost by the French and Israeli ambassadors. After each protest, the Swiss would invite and reprimand the Office's head, Zoher Kabbani, threatening him with consequences. But this was to no avail: The Arab League continued its propaganda efforts in Switzerland.<sup>1097</sup>

At first, the Office staff consisted of four persons. Besides Kabbani, it included assistant observer Dr. Moukhtar El-Wakil, secretary Atef Danial and the attaché André Baladi. As the delegation received no diplomatic recognition, it was attached to the Yemenite mission at the UN.<sup>1098</sup> The Arab Office quickly liaised with the pro-Arab circles in

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<sup>1095</sup> Friedrich Holzapfel and BRD Gesandtschaft Bern, "Betr. angebliche Einrichtung eines Propagandabüros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" June 22, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1096</sup> "Letter by the Chargé d'affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Egypt."

<sup>1097</sup> "Memo for Minister Kohli on the Arab Information Office in Geneva" April 13, 1959, CH-BAR#E2001E#1972/33#5139\*; "Memo for Minister Kohli on visit of the Israeli Ambassador" June 27, 1960, CH-BAR#E2001E#1972/33#5139\*.

<sup>1098</sup> Zoher Kabbani, "Letter to Federal Councillor Max Petitpierre," June 25, 1957, CH-BAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388\*.

Switzerland. Thus, Zoher Kabbani and Atef Danial, a Ba'athist studying in Switzerland at the time, entertained relations with François Genoud.<sup>1099</sup> Atef Danial was further known by Swiss authorities to have been active in a leading role on behalf of the FLN.<sup>1100</sup> Considering the connection between Atef and Genoud, it is only fair to assume that it was not a mere coincidence that the founding of Genoud's '*Banque Commerciale Arabe*' (Engl. Arab Commercial Bank) was so prominently announced on the back-cover of one of the magazines published by the Arab League in Geneva.<sup>1101</sup> In winter 1960, Kabbani was replaced as head of the Office by Abdel Moneim Moustafa, the former Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League, but it is not clear whether he ever took up the post.<sup>1102</sup> Instead, the Egyptian Moukhtar El-Wakil became the dominant figure in the Office. El-Wakil was a gifted socializer, who easily built a rapport with the Geneva society. He was holding regular press conferences, where he would relay the Arab view to the Swiss media. These activities ran counter to the initial agreements with the Swiss authorities and aroused unease among his hosts but were nevertheless tolerated.<sup>1103</sup> El-Wakil also turned the Arab Office into a venue for cultural events on topics related to the Arab world. Exhibits and social events succeeded in drawing various influential personalities. Such illustrious figures as the president of the IKRK, federal councillor Max Petitpierre and many others honored the Arab Office with their presence during El-Wakil's tenure.<sup>1104</sup> These accomplishments were eventually

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<sup>1099</sup> Pean, *L'Extremiste François Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 221.

<sup>1100</sup> "Report on Saadi Bississo" April 6, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

<sup>1101</sup> "Letter from the Geneva police," July 27, 1959, CH-BAR#E2001E#1972/33#5139\*.

<sup>1102</sup> "Letter by the Swiss Embassy in Egypt," November 28, 1960, CH-BAR#E2001E#1972/33#5139\*.

<sup>1103</sup> EDA, "Letter to Ibrahim Moukhtar El Wakil," March 8, 1962, CH-BAR#E2001E#1976/17#516\*.

<sup>1104</sup> "Memo for Federal Councillor Wahlen on Arab League" February 25, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

rewarded by his superiors, who made him the permanent delegate of the Arab League to the UN in Geneva in 1963.<sup>1105</sup>

From their beginnings, the Arab League Office and the Arab embassies were trying to impress their view point upon the public. In the mid-1960s, however, they adopted a new strategy by fostering the build-up of a 'native' network of pro-Arab groups. The general pattern was that such groups were nominally headed by Swiss activists but funded and coordinated by the Arab League and the Arab embassies. These efforts led to the establishment of the Swiss-Arab Society, the first group to fit this pattern. In February 1965, Arab diplomats in Switzerland, including the United Arab Republic's ambassador Mohammed Tewfik Abdel Fatta, met in Berne to discuss the establishment of a Swiss-Arab friendship group. They hoped to assemble leading Swiss politicians and other personalities together with the members of the Arab diplomatic staff within the group, as El-Wakil reported to the magazine *Le commerce du Levant*. During the meeting, the officials also discussed the handling of the Arab boycott vis-à-vis Swiss companies engaged in trade with Israel and the establishment of additional "Arab cultural centers" in other Swiss cities besides Geneva.<sup>1106</sup> When these plans however came to the knowledge of the Swiss authorities, they reprimanded Arab League representative El-Wakil for his involvement in boycott and propaganda activities, as "[...] such a proceeding is in contradiction to our liberal convictions and our notion of freedom, which has to prevail in our country. An action on Swiss soil would be an infringement of our sovereignty."<sup>1107</sup> Despite this harsh reprimand, the Swiss refrained from preventing the realization of El-Wakil's plans.

In June 1965, the Swiss NationalBolshevist journalist Hans Fleig and Dr. Hans Ellenberger eventually founded the Swiss-Arab Society (Ger. *Schweiz-Arabische Gesellschaft*, Fr. *Association Suisse-Arabe*) with the support of the Arab diplomats Moukthar El-Wakil and UAR ambassador Mohammed Tewfik Abdel Fatta. Hans Fleig

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<sup>1105</sup> "M. El Wakil, Représentant Permanent de La Ligue Arabe à Genève," *Journal de Genève*, July 1, 1963.

<sup>1106</sup> "Une Association Arabo-Helvétique En Voie de Création à Berne," *Le Commerce Du Levant*, February 10, 1965.

<sup>1107</sup> "Memo for Federal Councillor Wahlen on Arab League."

hinted at the fact that money was further provided by Kuwait. In Fleig's words, the rationale for establishing the group was because the Arab cause "*was misunderstood in Switzerland and crushed by the overwhelming Zionist propaganda.*"<sup>1108</sup> The group aspired to change this. It organized several public events, usually hosting speakers affiliated with the Arab League. The first such event was held in Zurich in October 1965, with the roving ambassador of the Arab League Nashashibi holding an emotional speech on the situation of the Arab refugees.<sup>1109</sup> Moukhtar El-Wakil and Fleig also spoke at the event. The latter asserted that the media in Switzerland was biased with regard to the "*Arab problem*". Therefore, the aim of the new organization was to correct this and provide comprehensive information on the issue.<sup>1110</sup> The second Swiss organization with a clear anti-Zionist and pro-Arab leaning after Genoud's abortive *Association Internationale des Amis du Monde Arabe Libre* however soon fell into passivity. In 1968, Fleig finally dissolved its post office box, burying the Swiss-Arab Society for good.<sup>1111</sup>

Another aim of the Arab Office was to promote the goals of the nascent Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and gain acceptance for its local presence. The PLO had been founded in June 1964 under the auspices of Egyptian strongman, Gamal Abdel Nasser. Egypt pursued several goals with the establishment of the PLO. The organization was meant to prevent the integration of the Palestinian Arab refugees in the Arab society, which would have removed pressure from Israel, and fostered their national identity as Palestinians. Up until now, it had been common, also in Arab propaganda literature, as cited in this study, to refer to the Arab inhabitants of Palestine as Palestinian Arabs. The PLO Charta defined as a Palestinian every Arab who had lived in Palestine until 1947 or was descended from an Arab Palestinian father. The

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<sup>1108</sup> "Memo on Hans Fleig."

<sup>1109</sup> "Arabische Probleme - Eine Vortragsveranstaltung in Zürich," *NZZ*, October 22, 1965.

<sup>1110</sup> "File (Fiche) Hans Fleig 1949-1984" October 21, 1965, 6, CH-BAR#E4320-01C#1996/203.

<sup>1111</sup> "File (Fiche) Hans Fleig 1949-1984" February 22, 1968, 7, CH-BAR#E4320-01C#1996/203.

establishment of the PLO permitted Egypt to exert control on Palestinian nationalism.<sup>1112</sup> Egypt's predominance was also manifested by the election of Ahmed Shukeiri, who was an intimate of Nasser. He was selected as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.<sup>1113</sup> In the same vein, the PLO was also integrated in the Arab League propaganda network, which was dominated by Egypt.

On February 17, 1965, the Syrian Dr. Saadi Bississo, a former law professor at the University of Aleppo who was born in Gaza in 1908 during the Ottoman rule, entered Switzerland: He was in possession of a diplomatic visa from the Swiss embassy in Damascus and a Syrian diplomatic passport.<sup>1114</sup> Bississo's mission had been announced by a Cairo press agency in its publication *Nouvelles du Moyen-Orient* and was therefore known to Swiss authorities in advance. According to the publication, Bississo arrived in Geneva to serve both as the permanent delegate of the PLO at the UN and to work for the Geneva Office of the UNRWA, the UN organization responsible for the Arab Palestinian refugees. To the Swiss embassy in Damascus, Bississo explained the details of his mission. He would be attached to the Arab League Offices in Geneva.<sup>1115</sup> His intention was to launch – in collaboration with the Arab League staff in Geneva – an “*information campaign on the Palestinian problem*” in Switzerland, which was part of an international propaganda campaign by the PLO designed to provide “*a better understanding of the Palestinian problems and the goals it [the PLO] is pursuing*.”<sup>1116</sup> The Swiss authorities were eager to prevent Bississo from carrying out his mission, as they considered the move to be another Arab affront to Swiss neutrality. Moreover, they were wary of a potential politicization of the UNRWA Office

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<sup>1112</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order*, 15.

<sup>1113</sup> Aaron Mannes, *Profiles in Terror: A Guide to Middle East Terrorist Organizations* (Lanham, Md, 2004), 270.

<sup>1114</sup> “Memo for the Federal Alien Police on Dr. Saadi Bississo” April 10, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

<sup>1115</sup> “Report on Saadi Bississo.”

<sup>1116</sup> “Telex to the Chief of Police” February 23, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.



in Geneva.<sup>1117</sup> Both the Yemenite delegation to the UN in Geneva and the Syrian embassy in Berne applied for an inclusion of Bississo in their diplomatic staff.<sup>1118</sup> Mukhtar El-Wakil also tried to receive a diplomatic visa for his prospective collaborator, Bississo.<sup>1119</sup>

In response to a Swiss diplomatic intervention, El-Wakil promised to the Swiss officials that Bississo had been tasked by the Arab League with discussing the problem of the Palestinian refugees with several international organizations in Geneva in the function of “*councilor for refugee affairs*” but that he would not engage in propaganda. The Swiss doubted these promises, both because they contradicted Arabic press articles and because of their experiences with past promises which had been made but not held by representatives of the Arab League to the Swiss authorities concerning its propaganda activity in Switzerland. They believed that El-Wakil was duplicitous but hoped that their forceful attitude had deterred the Arab League official from his plans to carry out a pro-Palestinian propaganda campaign in Switzerland: “*On the honesty of these [El-Wakil’s] statements we are not deceiving ourselves, but we could hope for that our intervention would be effective at least for a certain time. It seems well to have been the case.*”<sup>1120</sup> However, the Swiss failed to sustain their opposition to Bississo’s nomination for long. In addition to the pressure exerted by the Arab states and the Arab League, the director of the UN in Geneva, the Italian Peer Pasquale Spinelli, urged the

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<sup>1117</sup> “Memo for the Department of International Organizations and for the Service for Technical Cooperation on Dr. Saadi Bississo” February 25, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

<sup>1118</sup> “Memo for the Federal Alien Police on Dr. Saadi Bississo.”

<sup>1119</sup> “Report on Saadi Bississo.”

<sup>1120</sup> “Memo on Dr. Saadi Bississo” September 17, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

Swiss to find a solution for Bississo.<sup>1121</sup> The Swiss eventually gave in and in October 1965 they authorized the inclusion of Bississo in the diplomatic staff of Yemen.<sup>1122</sup>

Besides propaganda and liaison, the Arab Office in Geneva was also involved in the Arab boycott of Israel. The activities were directed by the Central Boycott Office of the Arab League in Damascus, which was heavily pressurizing Swiss companies to abandon their trade with Israel.<sup>1123</sup> The Arab embassies supported this effort, conducting research in Switzerland to assemble not only lists of Swiss companies engaged in trade with Israel, but also of Jewish citizens and Israeli residents in Switzerland. Despite El-Wakil's assertions vis-à-vis Swiss authorities that they would not join these boycott activities, the Arab League Office was involved in collecting information on behalf of the boycott.<sup>1124</sup> All this was in clear violation of Swiss law, as was noted in a report for the Federal Department of Justice and Police. Swiss law explicitly prohibited political and economic intelligence activity by foreign states. Despite this, no consequences seem to have followed these illicit Arab activities. In October of 1965, the Swiss were considering the issuing of a diplomatic demarche to the roving ambassador of the Arab League Nashashibi, or to the Arab League's Secretary General Abdel Kahlek Hassouna in protest against the Arab boycott of Israel, which also affected major Swiss companies like the retailer Migros. *"This demarche,"* noted General Secretary Michel of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, *"would pursue the purpose to make clear to Nashashibi, how much his efforts to promote understanding for the Arab cause in foreign countries, is paralyzed by his harassments of Swiss companies with boycott difficulties."*<sup>1125</sup> The wording is ambiguous. Did the

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<sup>1121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1122</sup> "Letter to the Permanent Mission of Yemen to the UN in Geneva," October 14, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

<sup>1123</sup> "Memo for Federal Councillor Wahlen on Arab League."

<sup>1124</sup> "Résumé de la proposition du Département de justice et police du 11 juillet 1967 concernant SAID FADL Abdel Mohammed Adel" July 11, 1967, CH-BAR#E2210.7(A)#1987/57.

<sup>1125</sup> "Letter to the Swiss Embassy in Cairo on the Boycott of Israel," October 11, 1965, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#848\*.

Swiss threaten to curtail Arab propaganda in Switzerland if the Arab boycott against Swiss companies continued? In the same month, the Swiss eventually acceded to the installation of PLO representative Bississo in Geneva. Did the Arabs promise in return to exclude Swiss companies from the boycott? There are strong indications but no conclusive proof for this suspicion. However, this was not the only event where the Swiss seem to have used the Arab propaganda network in Switzerland as a bargaining chip in negotiations.

One of the officials organizing the Arab boycott in Switzerland was Mohammed Said Fadl, who had been appointed as economic councilor to the delegation of Yemen and the Arab League at the UN in 1967.<sup>1126</sup> His role became clear to Swiss authorities when he commissioned a commercial agency in Geneva to collect information on *“Swiss enterprises which were headed by persons of Jewish descent, of Israeli nationality or in commercial relations with Israel.”*<sup>1127</sup> After Fadl had received the information he sought, these enterprises were added to the Arab black list. Again, although Fadl’s activity was illegal, Swiss authorities refrained from taking legal action due to his diplomatic status. Mohammed Said Fadl was replaced by Michel Issa Madanat in December 1969 in this function.<sup>1128</sup> One of his close collaborators was Siba Nasser (b. 15.03.1941), the former attaché of the Syrian embassy in Berne before becoming the attaché of the permanent Syrian delegation at the UN. Nasser was also working on behalf of the Arab boycott in Switzerland.<sup>1129</sup> Madanat and Nasser not only spied on Swiss companies, but on Swiss Jews and Israelis as well, to whom they generally

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<sup>1126</sup> Geneva Police, “Contrôle téléphonique de la Délégation Permanente de la Ligue des Etats arabes, avenue Krieg 7, 01.05.1969 - 30.06.1969” June 21, 1969, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1214\*.

<sup>1127</sup> “Résumé de la proposition du Département de justice et police du 11 juillet 1967 concernant SAID FADL Abdel Mohammed Adel.”

<sup>1128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1129</sup> Cantonal Police of Zurich, “Report on Siba Nasser” December 5, 1969, CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*; Service Politique du Corps de Police, République et Canton de Genève, “Contrôle Téléphonique de La Délégation Permanente de La Ligue Des Etats Arabes, Avenue Krieg 7, 12. 1. 1970 - 26. 7. 1970.”

referred to as “*Zionists*”. In a phone call between Nasser and Madanat on July 27, 1970, Madanat reported on his activities: “*Besides, I found here the names of four Levi families, all of them Zionists, but unfortunately, I did not find anything on the one that interests us.*”<sup>1130</sup> The extent of the spying activity by Arab states and the Arab League on the Swiss Jewish community has never been properly investigated.

#### 6.4 Germany: A special case

In January 1956, the German Foreign Office became aware of articles in the Egyptian press reporting that the Arab League was planning the establishment of a propaganda office in Germany. The Arab League proclaimed that the German public was being led astray by “*strong Israeli propaganda*” and that the Israelis were planning to intensify their activities in Germany.<sup>1131</sup> In April 1956, the Secretary General of the Arab League Abdul Khalek Hassoua contacted the German Ambassador in Cairo to probe the possibilities of opening an Arab Information Office of the Arab League in Germany. The Germans reacted negatively to the plans, believing the prospective office to be tasked with enforcing the Arab boycott of Israel in Germany and putting pressure on German companies. Moreover, the Germans distrusted the Arab League’s assertion that the Arab Office would stick to its official agenda.<sup>1132</sup> The German ambassador in Egypt however warned that a German rejection would be perceived by the Arabs as an affront.<sup>1133</sup> Still, there was no official request by the Arab League, when deputy secretary Raif Bellema informed the press in June 1956 that the German authorities

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<sup>1130</sup> Service Politique du Corps de Police, République et Canton de Genève, “Contrôle Téléphonique de La Délégation Permanente de La Ligue Des Etats Arabes, Avenue Krieg 7, 12. 1. 1970 - 26. 7. 1970,” 4–5.

<sup>1131</sup> BRD Botschaft Kairo, “Betr. Errichtung eines Informationsbüros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn” January 6, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1132</sup> “Memo by the Chargé d’affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Egypt” June 21, 1956, CH-BAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388\*.

<sup>1133</sup> Walther Becker and BRD Botschaft Kairo, “Telegram to AA,” April 16, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

had permitted the establishment of the office on their soil.<sup>1134</sup> By presenting the Germans with a *fait accompli*, he probably sought to make it more difficult for them to deny the request for fear of causing an international scandal. Still, the Germans announced that they had not dealt with such a request by the Arab League and were opposed to boycott activities on their soil. Fakoussa disclaimed reports in the German press that he was sent to Bonn to enforce the Arab boycott. Bellema also accommodated the German concerns and claimed to have never spoken to the press to prematurely announce the opening of the Arab Office. Despite the small irritation, the Germans did not see any legal grounds for preventing the establishment of the Arab Office and did not wish to do so to avoid angering the Arabs.<sup>1135</sup> Moreover, the Germans thought that the opening of the Arab Office provided them with leverage in case the Arab states were considering recognizing the GDR.<sup>1136</sup> This was in line with the '*Hallstein-Doktrin*', which stipulated that the FRG was the only legitimate German state.

Since April 1956, the Egyptian journalist Hassan Awas Fakoussa was expected to fill the position as the head of the Arab League Office. The German ambassador in Egypt described him as a moderate, who was respected by the embassy. He was well acquainted with Germany and married to a German woman.<sup>1137</sup> Fritz Grobba, who knew Fakoussa, considered him to be friendly to German interests, but alleged that he wrongly pretended to hold a doctoral degree.<sup>1138</sup> Interestingly, the AA reports on Fakoussa only mentioned his activities after the war, when he briefly worked for a

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<sup>1134</sup> Holzapfel and BRD Gesandtschaft Bern, "Betr. angebliche Einrichtung eines Propagandabüros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn."

<sup>1135</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, "Aufzeichnung betr. geplante Errichtung eines Büros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" August 31, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1136</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, "Aufzeichnung betr. geplante Errichtung eines Büros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" September 12, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1137</sup> Becker and BRD Botschaft Kairo, "Telegram to AA," April 16, 1956.

<sup>1138</sup> Fritz Grobba, "Betr. 'Dr.' Hassan A. Fakoussa" August 5, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

lawyer in Bonn.<sup>1139</sup> They however chose to omit his history in the Third Reich. In the late 1930s, Hassan Fakoussa had been working as a correspondent at the League of Nations in Geneva for the Egyptian newspapers *Al Mokattam* and *Al Muktataf*.<sup>1140</sup> In 1938, he earned a degree from the Geneva Graduate Institute of International Studies with a work on 'The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance'.<sup>1141</sup> During the war, Fakoussa resided in Germany, allegedly working for German propaganda for the Middle East.<sup>1142</sup> He regularly wrote on Middle Eastern subjects for the Nazi press. In an article in the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* in 1940, he claimed that Britain was engaged in a “*war against Islamic nationalism and the religion of Islam*”.<sup>1143</sup> In the same year, he also authored an article titled 'The struggle in Palestine' for the periodical *Der Weltkampf*.<sup>1144</sup> In 1942, he wrote an article for the scholarly periodical *Europäischer Wissenschaftsdienst*, in which he challenged National Socialist pseudo-scientific theories, which claimed that “Aryan” immigration was the origin of Egyptian civilization. Fakoussa instead defended the African origins of Egyptian civilization and thus offended Fakoussa’s nationalist feeling.<sup>1145</sup> Sometime after the war, he left Germany for Egypt.

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<sup>1139</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, “Aufzeichnung betr. geplante Errichtung eines Büros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn,” August 31, 1956.

<sup>1140</sup> Hassan Awas Fakoussa, “Letter to the Swiss Federal Police for Foreigners” May 17, 1939, CHBAR#E2001D#1000/1551#260\*.

<sup>1141</sup> Hassan A. Fakoussa, *The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance*, Diplôme / Institut Universitaire de Hautes Études Internationales, Genève 37 (Genève: Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales, 1938).

<sup>1142</sup> A. Razak Abdel Kader, *Le Monde arabe à la veille d'un tournant* (François Maspero, 1966), 138.

<sup>1143</sup> David Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany's War*, First Edition /First Printing edition (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 2014), 29, 345.

<sup>1144</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:1107.

<sup>1145</sup> Hassan Fakoussa, “Les Peuples d’Egypte et Leurs Origines,” *Europäischer Wissenschaftsdienst* 2, no. 4/5 (1942): 1–2; via Chris Rodriguez, “Methodologische

Hassan Fakoussa returned to Germany in late August 1956 to launch the Arab Office.<sup>1146</sup> In a conversation with the AA in September 1956, he claimed that he was neither interested in Israel nor the Arab League, but solely in Germany's interests and would work to promote German-Arab friendship.<sup>1147</sup> It was difficult to distinguish whether he was working for the Arab League or Egypt or for both. Fakoussa and the Egyptian embassy in Bad Godesberg, a suburb of Bonn, closely collaborated with the Arab Office located in the same building.<sup>1148</sup> During the Suez Crisis in October 1956, a wide segment of the public and the press sympathized with Nasser against Germany's Western allies. Reflecting on this, an AA memorandum expressed concern that a further increase in pro-Arab propaganda in Germany as a result of the activities of the Arab League might be harmful to Adenauer's pro-Western foreign policy. To counter this tendency, the memorandum raised the possibility of intensifying governmental public diplomacy efforts concerning the Middle East.<sup>1149</sup> As it soon became clear, Hassan Fakoussa did not wait for his agreements with the German authorities to be put in written form, but started his propaganda activities right away, intent on creating facts on the ground. Instead of coordinating with the AA and promoting German-Arab friendship, he published material critical of Israel and sought to strengthen the pro-Arab network in Germany, being involved in the establishment of the *Deutsch-Arabischer Verein* in December 1956. Moreover, he sought to collect a

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und historiografische Kritik des Buches von Eugen Fischer und Gerhard Kittel, 'Das antike Weltjudentum'" (PhD, Université Paris-Est Créteil Val de Marne, 2012), 63–66.

<sup>1146</sup> Walther Becker and BRD Botschaft Kairo, "Telegram to AA," August 24, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1147</sup> "Vermerk betr. Informationsbüro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" September 5, 1956, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1148</sup> AA, "Aufzeichnung betr. 'Arabische Korrespondenz'" September 6, 1957, PA AA B130.6387A; AA and Voigt, "Betr. Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn."

<sup>1149</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, "Aufzeichnung betr. geplante Errichtung eines Büros der Arabischen Liga in Bonn," September 12, 1956.

list of Arab students in Germany.<sup>1150</sup> He probably sought to exercise political influence and a measure of control over them, as the Egyptian embassy in Switzerland did.

Feeling irritated by Fakoussa's activities, the AA proposed several measures to restrain them.<sup>1151</sup> In 1957, the Egyptian Embassy in Bad Godesberg made its first attempts at public diplomacy. It started publishing the *Cairo-Brief* (Engl. Cairo letter), a periodical that regularly reported on economic news related to the Middle East and Egypt. In the same year, Fakoussa also launched the magazine *Arabische Korrespondenz*, which added to German irritation. Many of its articles criticized the German government. They were also marked by conspiratorial and Arab nationalistic thought. The AA was therefore considering taking steps to make Fakoussa leave Germany without attracting too much attention.<sup>1152</sup> In conversations with the Egyptian embassy and its ambassador Ahmed Razek, the Germans urged the Egyptians to exert a moderating influence on Fakoussa. The latter however defended Fakoussa's polemics as an act of self-defense against propaganda emanating from the Israeli embassy and the Jewish newspaper *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*. In reply, the Germans intimated that they were also ready to advise the Israelis to tone down their rhetoric. In the aftermath of the demarche, the Germans believed that Fakoussa moderated his voice. For this reason and because the German ambassador to Egypt Walther Becker advised against expelling Fakoussa to avoid a scandal with the Arabs and for lack of a more moderate alternative Arab League representative, no further steps were taken.<sup>1153</sup> There was another reason for the Germans to tread with care in the matter. In January 1958, Arab League General Secretary Abdul Khalek Hassouna informed the German ambassador in Cairo, Walther

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<sup>1150</sup> Abteilung 3 AA, "Betr. Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" March 31, 1957, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1152</sup> Abteilung 3 AA, "Aufzeichnung betr. Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" August 17, 1957, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1153</sup> AA, "Aufzeichnung betr. 'Arabische Korrespondenz'"; Abteilung 3 AA, "Aufzeichnung betr. Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" September 23, 1957, PA AA B130.6387A.



Becker, that the idea of moving the Arab Office to the GDR had been discussed during one of the League's recent sessions. From there, Arab propaganda towards the German public could be carried out unhindered.<sup>1154</sup> Such a step would have afforded the GDR further legitimacy, which the AA sought to prevent. Thus, contrary to initial considerations, when the Germans hoped to gain leverage against the Arabs by allowing the opening of the Arab Office in the German capital, the Arabs now used their leverage to secure the continuation of Arab propaganda in the FDR.

The next episode also showed that Germany was susceptible to Arab pressure regarding the tolerance of anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic propaganda on its soil. In early May 1959, the German police confiscated an Arab League booklet titled 'Palästinas Schicksal' (Engl. Palestine's Fate), that contained a foreword by Hassan Fakoussa. In the anglophone world, the booklet was distributed under the title 'Palestine Destiny'. The German police decided to confiscate the magazine after an article appeared in the *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland* written by a certain Mr. Kaufmann, which claimed that parts of the publication were copied from a 1957 anti-Semitic booklet published in Cairo with the title 'The Secrets of Zionism' (Arab. *Asrar al-Sahyuniya*). Arab propaganda sought to exploit the incident, with Radio Baghdad reporting that the German government had banned all Arab propaganda against Zionism.<sup>1155</sup> The Egyptian Foreign Office protested the confiscation and the Moroccan ambassador in Bonn personally intervened with undersecretary Herbert Dittmann. As a result of the intervention, an indictment against the printing-house responsible for printing the booklet was halted.<sup>1156</sup> After the affair, Fakoussa continued to reprint anti-Semitic articles from the Arab press in his *Arabische Korrespondenz*. For instance, it peddled one of the favorite themes of Arab and Islamic propaganda, the Jewish war against religion. Thus, an article in 1963 alleged that Israel was distributing falsified

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<sup>1154</sup> Walther Becker and BRD Botschaft Kairo, "Betr. Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn" January 28, 1958, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1155</sup> AA, "Betr. angebliche Beschlagnahmemassnahmen im Bonner Büro der arabischen Liga" August 18, 1959, PA AA B130.6387A.

<sup>1156</sup> Walther Becker and BRD Botschaft Kairo, "Schwierigkeiten mit dem Bonner Büro der Arabischen Liga" August 22, 1959, PA AA B130.6387A.

Coran books in the US and Africa, which offered a pro-Zionist interpretation of the Islamic scriptures. This was part of Israel's plan to gain favor among the new African states. The article also accused Zionists of falsifying Christianity by asking the Catholic church to remove material characterizing Jews as the murderers of Christ.<sup>1157</sup>

Given his experience in the Third Reich, it is not surprising that Fakoussa showed a greater tendency to work with pro-Nazi and far-right circles to lobby Arab interests in Germany than his Arab League counterparts in New York and Switzerland. In his function as the Arab representative in Bonn, he was advised by Johann von Leers, whom he went to see in Cairo.<sup>1158</sup> Fakoussa also contributed regularly to the far-right *Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung*.<sup>1159</sup> One of the more bizarre episodes was Fakoussa's collaboration with the German Sudeten committee, which represented ethnic German expellees from Czechoslovakia. He helped put one of its leaders, Rudolf Hilf, in touch with diplomats and notables of the Arab world residing in Bonn. Hilf subsequently travelled to Egypt, where he met with former allies of the Germans like the Mufti, former *SS-Handschar* imam Haris Korkut and Anwar el-Sadat. Hilf strove to gain the support of the Arab state to introduce a "right to homeland" in the UN. He assumed that there was common ground between the Germans and the Arabs, as the latter would be interested in such a right because of the Arab-Palestinian refugees. But eventually, it would also serve the interests of the German expellees.<sup>1160</sup> Fakoussa's *Arabische Korrespondenz* maintained that Germany was suffering from a "Hitler complex", which prevented Germany from pursuing its natural alliance with the Arabs. This "Hitler complex," as the editor in chief of an Egyptian newspaper implied in an article reprinted

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<sup>1157</sup> "Israels Angriff auf die heiligen Schriften," *Arabische Korrespondenz* 7, no. 17 (November 2, 1963): 1–3.

<sup>1158</sup> Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 218.

<sup>1159</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:1107.

<sup>1160</sup> Gilad Margalit, "The Foreign Policy of the German Sudeten Council and Hans-Christoph Seebohm, 1956–1964," *Central European History* 43, no. 03 (2010): 473–74.

by the *Arabische Korrespondenz*, was fostered by Israel.<sup>1161</sup> The article claimed, “*that the FRG had become the most important area of this kind of Israeli propaganda*”, which sought to cultivate a feeling of collective guilt within the Germans and thereby exploit them economically, through restitution, and politically, by gaining diplomatic recognition.<sup>1162</sup> Fakoussa seems to have realized at some point that his collaboration with pro-Nazi and fascist elements like Priester’s *Deutsch-Soziale Bewegung* had become a liability and that he had to reach out to larger segments of the German population in order to make a difference: “[I] had come to Germany to promote German-Arab relations in all areas. Were I to found a German-Arab Institute, it would be in the general interest of the German-speaking peoples and of the Arab people and states, and not in the interest of individuals, parties, or circles. The Arabs are fighting against foreign interference in their politics and consequently would never think of supporting a group in some other country against its government.”<sup>1163</sup> Colluding with the far-right was certainly not a winning strategy to convince the German public of the justness of the Arab cause. Moreover, anti-Semites barely needed any convincing to feel sympathy for the Arabs and hatred for Israel. Thus, the German far-right continued to strongly sympathize with Arab nationalism throughout the 1960s, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Instead of the far-right, Arab League representatives increasingly sought to move closer to the New Left and the nascent student movement during the 1960s. Fakoussa had been interested in the presence of Arab students in Germany since the beginning of his propaganda activity. This was in line with the policy of Egypt and other Arab states of instrumentalizing their students studying in the West as propagandists, for which there is evidence from different countries. According to secret information received by the Swiss government, an experienced Egyptian propagandist, who masqueraded as a student, had established the European branch of the Union of Arab Students (Ger. *Union Arabischer Studenten*) in 1956 as a front organization to secure

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<sup>1161</sup> “Arabischer Kommentar zur deutschen anti-arabischen Propaganda,” *Arabische Korrespondenz* 8, no. 6 (April 7, 1964): 2.

<sup>1162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1163</sup> Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 2:236.

the loyalty of Arab students to Nasser and spread his view-points.<sup>1164</sup> A *Jerusalem Post* article from 1959 likewise found that here was a system of tight political control of the Arab students in the US, which were organized in the Organization of Arab Students. The Arab students received propaganda material from the Arab embassies and the Arab League Offices. Those who did not participate in anti-Israel campaigning faced difficulties when returning home. According to the article, the Arab students had the advantage that they were more sociable and had more time at their disposal than the Israelis, making it easier for them to conduct propaganda. The main target of their activities was not Americans, but foreign students from Asian and African countries.<sup>1165</sup> In Germany, there were plenty of foreign student groups active in the late 1950s and 1960s, that advocated on behalf of the Third World. One such group was the *Afro-Asiatische Studenten-Union* (Engl. Afro-Asiatic Student Union). Along with many other guests, Fakoussa was hosted by the group at the celebration of its five-year anniversary in 1962.<sup>1166</sup> The *Arabische Korrespondenz* however provided no evidence that Fakoussa ever tried to further co-opt this group. The most important Arab student organization in Germany was the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), which had operated there since the early 1960s. Its activities were first directed at the numerous Arab students located in West Germany. Between 1962 and 1964 alone, 873 events were held in Germany.<sup>1167</sup> This group will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. There is no information on whether the Arab League provided any support to them. In sum, one gets the impression that Fakoussa invested little effort in recruiting the student and New Left political movements into the fold of the pro-Arab scene in Germany and remained fixated on the traditional friends of the Arabs.

The conference of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information in Cairo in 1964 and the establishment of the PLO in May of the same year resulted in an emphasis of Arab propaganda on the Palestine issue and the topic of anti-Imperialism, appealing to the

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<sup>1164</sup> "Report on the Union of Arab Students" 1959, E4320C#1994/120#781\*.

<sup>1165</sup> Vacca, "La Propaganda Araba e Quella Israeliana Negli Stati Uniti."

<sup>1166</sup> "Repräsentanten ferner Kulturen und Kontinente," *Arabische Korrespondenz* 6, no. 5 (March 10, 1962): 1–2.

<sup>1167</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 36–37.

political Left. Arab students were thought to be important purveyors of these themes. Thus, Nasser sent an address to the yearly conference of the Arab Student Union in the US in 1964, exhorting them: *“The Palestine cause is no race or religious matter, but the regaining of freedom for a people und restoration of its legitimate right, to life with honor in its own country. (...). Brothers, it is our duty, to call to the attention of all peoples, that they should not be deluded by Zionist propaganda or distorted fact. It is your difficult responsibility to be in a struggle with Zionism. You can confront it, if each one of you represents his country in its struggle and aspirations with resolve and high ideals.”*<sup>1168</sup> In line with the greater focus on Palestine, Fakoussa and the Arab League in Germany started a new magazine in 1964 titled *Palästina Nachrichten* (Engl. Palestine News). In a 1965 article on the Deir Yassin, the author remarked that while the Germans were very aware of the Holocaust, they had no knowledge of the Jewish crimes in Palestine. The events at Deir Yassin were presented as an indictment of Jewish character. The Jews still followed the commands of the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament, when God had ordered the Israelites to conquer Canaan through brutal means. The Arab mentality on the other hand, the author claimed, was free from brutality. After ten years in Germany, in mid-1966, Hassan Fakoussa was recalled to Egypt to work for the oil department of the Arab League. His interim replacement was Hamdy Azzam.<sup>1169</sup> Perhaps his limited efforts and success in engaging with the New Left were responsible for this decision. In February 1967, the former head of the Arab League Office in Geneva and current Arab League propaganda responsible Zoheir Kabbani, became the Arab League representative in Bonn.<sup>1170</sup> The Six-Day War, which would break out five months later, would be a watershed moment for Germany’s relations with Israel.

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<sup>1168</sup> “Nassers Botschaft an arabische Studenten in den USA,” *Arabische Korrespondenz* 8, no. 17 (October 28, 1964): 4.

<sup>1169</sup> “Dr. Hassan Fakoussa,” *Arabische Korrespondenz* 10, no. 11 (August 12, 1966): 4.

<sup>1170</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, “Vermerk zu Herr Zoheir Kabbani” February 7, 1967, PA AA B36.289.

## 6.5 Development of the Arab propaganda strategy after 1967

Arab public diplomacy was a function of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As inter-Arab rivalry between Egypt and Iraq diminished after 1964, while the Arab-Israeli conflict escalated, particularly over the use of the Jordan river water, so did the propaganda battle. At the third summit of the Arab League in Casablanca in September 1965 for instance, the final declaration called on everybody to “*use newspapers, radio and other means of publishing and media, to serve the Arab cause*”,<sup>1171</sup> which meant foremost – as noted in the preamble – “*the struggle for the liberation of Palestine (...) and the need for harmony and reconciliation among Arab countries (...)*.”<sup>1172</sup> The summit further stipulated increased control of the press in order to strengthen inter-Arab relations.<sup>1173</sup> Likewise, the Six-Day War in 1967 had a significant impact on the organization of public diplomacy within the Arab League. As a result of their defeat against Israel, the Arab regimes found themselves heavily compromised. After all, the Pan-Arab dictatorships in both Syria and Egypt had legitimized their rule also by the promise of the near destruction of Israel. Now, in order to secure his continued rule, Nasser’s regime’s public communication emphasized the message that the catastrophic defeat was far from final, but only a temporary setback.<sup>1174</sup> Egypt’s propaganda during the war had falsely claimed that Israel had received military aid from the US and the UK.<sup>1175</sup> After

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<sup>1171</sup> Arab League, Arab League Council, Decisions at the 3<sup>rd</sup> summit in Casablanca (13-17 September 1965), available from [http://www.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=3441&cid=215#.U-zqKvl\\_vel](http://www.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=3441&cid=215#.U-zqKvl_vel)

<sup>1172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1173</sup> Sinno, 150

<sup>1174</sup> Honig, O. (2013). How Arab Leaders Shaped Their Postdefeat Domestic Propaganda Campaigns: Insights and Lessons for Today. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 4(1), 49f

<sup>1175</sup> See Elie Podeh, “The Lie That Won’t Die: Collusion, 1967,” *Middle East Quarterly*, January 1, 2004, <http://www.meforum.org/587/the-lie-that-wont-die-collusion-1967>.

the end of the war, such allegations of Western collusion were construed to deflect from the Arab defeat.

The Western public widely perceived the Arab states as aggressors during the 1967 war and granted Israel enthusiastic support. This general mood incensed the Arab states, which chose not to distinguish between public support and government policy. In an internationally concerted approach, Arab diplomats lodged their protests with Western governments, warning them that the pro-Israeli mood among the public represented a burden for their relations. Thus, on June 6, 1967, the second day of the war, ambassadors of eight Arab countries called on Swiss Federal Councilor Willy Spühler. They accused Spühler of partisanship in the conflict because he had expressed understanding for Israel's position in a speech in parliament on June 5, 1967. Moreover, they demanded an intervention from the Federal Council to halt the manifestations of pro-Israeli sentiment, or, as the Arab diplomats understood it, "*anti-Arab tendencies*", in the public and in the media. Spühler rejected these demands, insisting on the freedom of the press and opinion. A few days later, Arab representatives also filed a complaint against Switzerland with the UN in Geneva. They claimed that the pro-Israeli manifestations in Switzerland were of a racist and religious character and that they had been the victims of anonymous threats. As an EDA report noted, the Arab states however failed to provide evidence for these claims.<sup>1176</sup>

The approach in Germany was similar to that in Switzerland. Arab League representative in Bonn Zoheir Kabbani complained to the AA that the German press and television were too pro-Israeli and offensive to the Arabs. The AA responded that the Arab media were censoring reports of German help to the Arabs and rejected accusations that the government was pro-Israeli. It further asked Kabbani to stop the Office's propaganda against friendly states, meaning Israel and Germany's Western allies.<sup>1177</sup> The Arab states did not content themselves with diplomatic protests, but also

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<sup>1176</sup> Marianne von Grüningen and EDA, "Die Haltung der arabischen Staaten gegenüber der Schweiz" August 25, 1967, CH-BAR#E2001E#1978/84#1091\*, <https://dodis.ch/49524#>.

<sup>1177</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, "Aufzeichnung des Gesprächs mit der Arabischen Liga" June 23, 1967, PA AA B36.289.

called for an economic boycott of Western Germany, the UK and the US. Occasionally, Swiss enterprises were also affected by individual actions of boycott. The Arab states also discussed even harsher measures, such as an oil embargo. They would eventually follow through on this threat during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. For now however, the Arab states decided to cancel their plans of economic sanctions because they were economically dependent on the West. Switzerland also expected a quick improvement of its relations with the Arab world after the end of the war.<sup>1178</sup> Arab threats of a deterioration in diplomatic relations still had a long-term effect. Western governments became convinced that they had to invest in the improvement of their ties with the Arab world. As a result, they showed a certain tolerance for Arab propaganda campaigns on their soil after 1967, allegedly to balance Zionist propaganda. Additionally, under the threat of terrorism, Switzerland embraced a policy which sought to gain distance from Israel and move closer to the Arab states. One element of this policy was the start of direct negotiations with the PLO in 1970.<sup>1179</sup>

After the Arab states had shunned a political solution at the 4<sup>th</sup> Arab League summit in Khartoum in September 1967, they instead decided to escalate the conflict with Israel on military, diplomatic and economic levels. After the Khartoum summit, an extraordinary session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers was held in the Tunisian city of Bizerte from November 28 to 30. In his speech, the Lebanese information minister Michel Eddeh criticized the Arab propaganda effort for its failure to gain support among the moderate Left: *“The theme of violence in Arab propaganda is almost always ineffective; The propaganda that we have developed is not a propaganda intended to convince the Zionists of the groundlessness of their claims, but a propaganda intended to conquer the solidarity of the outside world and to convince it of justness of the Arabic theses. It must be recognized that Zionist propaganda has succeeded in obtaining from time to time the support of the international financial circles and of the non-communist left, and in fact often the*

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<sup>1178</sup> Grüningen and EDA, “Die Haltung der arabischen Staaten gegenüber der Schweiz.”

<sup>1179</sup> Jonathan Kreutner, *Die Schweiz und Israel: auf dem Weg zu einem differenzierten historischen Bewusstsein* (Zürich, 2013), 102.



communist [Left], of Western Europe, by highlighting according to the circles to be convinced on the one hand that Israel is the forward base of the West, and on the other hand that it is the only socialist country in the region threatened by feudal states and retrograde.”<sup>1180</sup> The Lebanese information minister identified the capacity of Israel to gain sympathy among the Left by presenting it as a socialist and progressive country as the pillar of its support in the West. The right Arab propaganda strategy was therefore to undermine these perceptions.

In Bizerte, the Arab information ministers agreed on the establishment of a new fund designed to finance a “*project aimed at addressing the consequences of Zionist colonial aggression on Arab lands.*”<sup>1181</sup> The conference also worked out a long-term strategy for propaganda within Arab countries.<sup>1182</sup> After 1967, a clear shift in the content of Arab propaganda has been observed by May Abdallah-Sinno. She found that before 1967, 75% of the articles in the Arab Office publications had dealt with issues relating to culture, tourism and the economy. After 1967, these magazines became much more politicized in their content with 75% of their articles now dealing with the Palestinians.<sup>1183</sup> This finding is in line with the thesis that a “*Palestinization of the Arab-Israeli conflict*” took place after 1967.<sup>1184</sup> While before the war the Arab-Israeli conflict was primarily perceived as a conflict between states, it now came to be seen as a conflict between two peoples, the Palestinians and the Israelis. An Israeli report from 1969 estimated that the Arab states were expending 50 million dollars a year on their anti-Israel campaign. These efforts were remarkably successful, especially in educated circles and among the Left, a target of Arab propaganda efforts after

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<sup>1180</sup> P. G. D., “Dichiarazioni Di Michel Eddeh Sulla Propaganda Araba,” *Oriente Moderno* 47, no. 8/12 (1967): 650–51.

<sup>1181</sup> R., “Conferenza Dei Ministri Dell’Informazioni Arabi.”

<sup>1182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1183</sup> Sinno, 274f

<sup>1184</sup> Kelman, H.C. (1988). *The Palestinization of the Arab-Israeli conflict*. Jerusalem Quarterly, 46 (1), 3-15

1967.<sup>1185</sup> The focus of Arab propaganda on the Palestine issue was reaffirmed at the conference of the information ministers in February 1969 in Cairo.<sup>1186</sup> In 1973, the 6<sup>th</sup> Arab League summit in Algiers passed three resolutions relating to public propaganda: It was decided to raise an additional 5 million dollars for the Arab propaganda fund. The member states would also continue to contribute 3 million dollars annually to propaganda. Another resolution stipulated the establishment of commissions of Arab ambassadors in foreign countries designed to prepare action plans relating to public diplomacy.<sup>1187</sup> At the next summit in Rabat in October 1974, it was decided to raise another 30 million dollars for the Arab propaganda fund.<sup>1188</sup> These investments in public diplomacy paralleled a clear shift in Western public opinion regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1967. To what extent this shift was caused by Arab propaganda is impossible to assess. However, while it is important to emphasize that it is not likely that this public opinion shift was only caused by Arab propaganda, it is equally unlikely that it did not play any role at all.

This shift in public opinion contrasted sharply with the public euphoria for Israel during and after the Six-Day War, which was palpable in most countries in Western Europe. Contemporaries, both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab, were keenly aware of the shift in public opinion. During the Yom Kippur War in October 1973, the director of the pro-Israeli *Centre d'Information et de Documentation* in Geneva observed in a letter to the Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir: *"For days and weeks the front pages of the European newspapers have been monopolized by the Arabs. [...] The erosion of morale has to be stopped."*<sup>1189</sup> The Jewish umbrella organization *Schweizerischer Israelitischer Gemeindebund* SIG (Engl. Swiss Federation of Israelite Communities) used even more drastic terms, speaking of *"euphoria"* which had turned into an *"apocalyptic*

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<sup>1185</sup> Cummings, *Israel's Public Diplomacy*, 97.

<sup>1186</sup> P. G. D., "Conferenza Dei Ministri Arabi Dell'Informazioni," *Oriente Moderno* 49, no. 1/3 (1969): 21.

<sup>1187</sup> Sinno, 152f

<sup>1188</sup> Sinno, 155

<sup>1189</sup> Kreutner, 116

*depression*".<sup>1190</sup> The reversal of opinion was also registered by newspapers of the far-left, which approvingly noted the difference between the media reporting during the war in 1967 and during the current conflict. While then the majority of the media had characterized the Arabs disparagingly as incompetent and unorganized and had shown mistrust towards them, they had now changed their attitude, especially regarding the invincibility of Israel.<sup>1191</sup> Besides these observations, we also have empirical evidence of this shift in public opinion. This Jewish umbrella organization SIG regularly monitored the attitude of the Swiss public towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in the discussed period. A survey conducted in 1970 revealed that support for Israel in Switzerland was still overwhelming: 64 percent of those asked were sympathetic to Israel's conquests of formerly Arab-governed territories. Even more, 80 percent, supported the statement that Israel should only exchange the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan in return for a real peace with the Arabs. A series of questions asked both in the 1970 survey and again in a similar survey in 1975 allows us to track the change of opinion.

	1970	1975
<b>Arabs are to blame for the conflict</b>	37%	14%
<b>Israel is to blame for the conflict</b>	4%	4%
<b>Each side is to blame</b>	46%	61%
<b>Opinion of the Arabs changed favorably during the last three years</b>	5%	16%

Table 2: Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict in Switzerland 1970 - 1975<sup>1192</sup>

We can see from Table 2 that the attitude towards Israel did not change remarkably during those five years. The numbers of those who blamed Israel for the conflict remained stable. But what indeed changed during this time span was the attitude

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<sup>1190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1191</sup> Späti, C. (2006). Die schweizerische Linke und Israel: Israelbegeisterung, Antizionismus und Antisemitismus zwischen 1967 und 1991 (Vol. 2). Klartext-Verlag, 105

<sup>1192</sup> Kreutner, 124f

towards the Arabs: The number of those who blamed the Arabs for the conflict was reduced by 23%, while the neutral camp, those who blamed both sides, grew by 15%. In the same time, if one assumes that some of those who answered the question twice, between 16% and 21% of the Swiss populace changed their opinions toward the Arabs favorably from 1967 until 1970 and from 1972 until 1975 – a central goal of the Arab public diplomacy effort, as we have seen. Based on this data, we can conclude that the reversal of opinion with regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict is a matter of fact. While public opinion did not necessarily become more anti-Israeli during this period, it certainly became more pro-Arab. An intensive campaign organized by the Arab League on behalf of a group of PFLP terrorists contributed to the shift of public opinion. This campaign will be discussed in the next section.

## 6.6 Case Study: Terrorism against Switzerland, the Arab League and the PLO

The events of 1969 – 1970, when Switzerland became the target of Middle Eastern terror groups, offer an excellent case study into the workings of the Arab League after 1967. These years have recently become the focus of intensive public interest. A book by a Swiss journalist claimed that Switzerland had concluded a secret deal with the PLO in the wake of hijacking of five airplanes, including one from Swissair, in September 1970.<sup>1193</sup> A special governmental commission, which was set up after the book's publication to investigate these claims, however disputes this.<sup>1194</sup> While this chapter does not address the issue directly, it provides a background to these events, a background that is currently missing from the discussion. The terror campaign, which first struck Switzerland in February 1969, was engineered by Wadie Haddad, a leader of the paramilitary group Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and a Lebanese Christian of Palestinian origin. Haddad was convinced that Israel was unbeatable through conventional military means. From the beginning, the campaign

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<sup>1193</sup> Marcel Gyr, *Schweizer Terrorjahre: Das geheime Abkommen mit der PLO*, 1st ed. (Zürich, 2016), 133.

<sup>1194</sup> "Interdepartementale Arbeitsgruppe 1970 Schlussbericht" (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, May 3, 2016), 25, [https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/eda/de/documents/publications/Geschichte/interdepartementale-arbeitsgruppe-1970\\_de.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/eda/de/documents/publications/Geschichte/interdepartementale-arbeitsgruppe-1970_de.pdf).

had a dual purpose. On the one hand, Haddad sought to attack Israel's soft underbelly, which he identified as Israel's line of communications to Western Europe and the US. On the other hand, the staging of sophisticated and effect-seeking terrorist attacks was meant to capture the attention of the Western public with the purpose of raising awareness for the Palestinian cause. In many ways, Haddad's approach recalled the propaganda of the deed, a strategy which had been pioneered by anarchist movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, the PFLP's propaganda of the deed was complemented to a significant degree by traditional, non-violent propaganda of the word.

Terrorist organizations' endurance is shaped by three factors: The strength of their supporter base, the effectiveness of the counterterrorism response and outside sponsorship.<sup>1195</sup> Since the late 1960s, activists from the European New Left provided essential support to the PFLP. Propaganda of the deed and of the word was important to gain this support. As I will show, the trial against the PFLP terrorists, which was held in late 1969 in the Swiss city of Winterthur, is exemplary in this regard. A public support campaign was organized by the Arab League and Fatah, which was active both domestically and abroad. It sought to raise sympathy for the accused PFLP terrorists and their cause while also building up pressure on Switzerland to release the terrorists. The campaign co-opted anti-Zionist actors and groups from within Switzerland, many of them from the New Left. The establishment of these organizations was the result of a concerted strategy to engage the European public and in particular the New Left.

While literature on state support for terrorist groups pays some attention to diplomatic support,<sup>1196</sup> the issue of propaganda is seldom addressed. However, states can play a critical role in raising support for a terrorist organization via propaganda – as they did in the case of the PFLP. The Arab League Office, which was attached to the Yemen diplomatic mission, funded and organized the campaign to a large degree. Single Arab states, like Algeria or Libya, further involved themselves in the campaign, hoping to

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<sup>1195</sup> Kevin Siqueira and Todd Sandler, Terrorists versus the Government: Strategic Interaction, Support, and Sponsorship, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50/6 (2006): 878.

<sup>1196</sup> Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge, 2005), 61.

gain prestige from their support for the Palestinian cause. The events of 1969 -1970 in Switzerland thus offer an interesting case for studying the interaction between states, terrorist organizations and propaganda networks during this critical period in Swiss history.

The PFLP, which was responsible for the terror wave in 1969-1970, was a product and agent of the militarization of Palestinian politics after the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War. In December 1967, the Palestine Liberation Front merged with two offshoots of the Arab Nationalist Movement to form the PFLP. The new organization was chaired by George Habash, a Christian Orthodox Palestinian.<sup>1197</sup> The PFLP opposed the takeover of the PLO by Fatah in late 1968 and moved from Nasserism to Socialism. The ideological and political confrontation with Fatah contributed to the PFLP's radicalization in these years.<sup>1198</sup> In 1968, Wadie Haddad established the commando branch of the PFLP and assumed its leadership. Unlike the PLO, which organized an abortive military insurgency in the West Bank in 1968, the strategy focused on Israeli soft targets abroad. In line with the propaganda of deed approach, these attacks would advertise the Palestinian cause to the world public. In a meeting of the PFLP leadership in December 1967, Haddad had set out the details of his strategy:<sup>1199</sup>

*"What do I mean by that? I mean spectacular singular actions. These will direct the attention of the world towards the Palestine question. The world will ask: 'What's the Problem in Palestine? Who are the Palestinians? Why are they doing this? At the same time, these operations will be very painful for the Israelis. With prominent, sensational actions (...) – that is how we need to hit the neuralgic points. In the end, the world will*

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<sup>1197</sup> Mannes, *Profiles in Terror*, 310.

<sup>1198</sup> Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 144.

<sup>1199</sup> Kraushaar, " *Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?*, 27–28.

*be fed up with the problem. She will end up with the conclusion that something must happen with Palestine. She will need to give us justice.*"<sup>1200</sup>

Barely half a year after this statement, on 23 July, the PFLP launched an unprecedented campaign against Israeli civilian targets abroad, when three members of the PFLP hijacked an El Al Boeing 707 airplane on its route from Rome to Tel Aviv. They force the crew to fly to Algiers where they and the passengers are held hostage. Israel is compelled to free Palestinian prisoners in exchange for their release – a first big success for Haddad's strategy.<sup>1201</sup> Only five months later, on 26 December 1968, two PFLP terrorists arriving from Beirut conduct another operation at Athens airport. They attack an El Al airplane parked on the tarmac, killing one passenger. Before their arrest, they distribute PFLP leaflets.<sup>1202</sup>

A similar attack is planned for February 1969 in Zurich. A team of four, three men and a woman, Mohammed Abu El Heiga, Ibrahim Yousef, Amena Dahbor and Abdel Mehzen, is preparing for the attack scenario during a three-week course in a PFLP military camp in mid-January 1969 in the Nablus region. They learn the use of rifles and explosives, training the exact sequence of the operation. The first group, Abu El Heiga and Ibrahim Yousef, arrive in Zurich on 8 February after a complex itinerary by plane from Damascus via Beirut, Rome and Paris. They carry grenades, petards and 9.3 kilograms of explosives. The second group, Abdel Mehzen and Amena Dhabor, arrive from Amman via Vienna on the same day. Their suitcases hold two soviet-produced Kalashnikovs and ammunition as well as a stack of PFLP flyers. The next days are spent with preparing the attack and reconnoitering the airport. They are assisted by a certain Fuad Saad Zhaglul, possibly the fifth PFLP operative, who provides the group with a rental car. On 18 February, they decide to attack El Al flight LY432 from the parking lot. Two members of the team of four open fire on an El Al

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<sup>1200</sup> Bassam Abu-Sharif, Uzi Mahnaimi, and Bassam Abu- Sharif, *Mein Feind Mein Freund* (München, 1998), 84–85; cited via Kraushaar, " *Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?*", 28.

<sup>1201</sup> Kraushaar, " *Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?*", 30.

<sup>1202</sup> "שני מחבלים תקפו מטוס אל על באתונה," *Maariv*, 27 December, 1968.

airplane before take-off, wounding the co-pilot fatally. Another one throws a grenade in front of the plane to bring it to halt. The next step has Haddad's handwriting all over it: They plan to blow up the airplane after its evacuation. However, since the first attack in July, Israeli airplanes are accompanied by air marshals. This particular air marshal, a young Israeli named Mordehai Rahamim, descends from the airplane and pursues the attackers, killing Abdel Mehsen.<sup>1203</sup> The three surviving PFLP attackers and Rahamim are subsequently tried in the city of Winterthur north of Zurich.

Judicial scandals and an atmosphere of intimidation marked the second half of 1969. This climate was the product of a concerted campaign which was coordinated by Fatah, the Arab League and several Swiss anti-Zionist organizations. The groundwork for the campaign had been laid in the years before the terror attack when networks of Fatah, the leading Palestinian nationalist organization, penetrated Western Europe, including Switzerland. Since 1963, Fatah had dominated the major Arab student association in Germany, the *Generalunion Palästinensischer Studenten* GUPS. The German GUPS served as a model of the expansion of Fatah networks in Europe.<sup>1204</sup> Although there was no official GUPS chapter in Switzerland, Fatah established an active presence in there in the late 1960s. In 1968, Fuad al-Shamali, a Christian Orthodox Syrian, settles in Geneva as its representative, revealing his function two years later to the public. Shamali is a former student leader of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, a far-right party, and is married to the daughter of the party's founder, Antun Saadeh. After a failed coup attempt and his subsequent flight from Syria, he becomes close to the Palestinian cause in his exile in Paris.<sup>1205</sup> Shamali can count on the services of other Arab activists, who make Switzerland their home in the late

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<sup>1203</sup> "Bill of Indictment" (Office of the District Attorney, 12 August, 1969), CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1204</sup> Abdallah Frangi, *Der Gesandte: Mein Leben für Palästina. Hinter den Kulissen der Nahost-Politik* (München, 2012), 98–102.

<sup>1205</sup> Pean, *L'Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 337–38.



1960s.<sup>1206</sup> The main partners for this network were the Arab League, the nascent New Left and a selection of anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi activists, like the notorious Nazi publisher François Genoud, whose role in the campaign shall be discussed later.

The Fatah network in Switzerland was also actively supported by the infrastructure of the Arab League in Switzerland. The nature of the relations between the Arab League, the PLO and Fatah necessitates some explanation. The Arab League had opened an office in Switzerland in 1957 in the city of Geneva. As Switzerland did not grant diplomatic status to the Arab League and its representatives, they were attached to the Yemeni diplomatic mission.<sup>1207</sup> In 1964, the PLO is founded under the auspices of Egypt, which is then the leader of Arab nationalism and largely controls the Arab League. The destiny of both organizations is therefore strongly entwined and their cooperation explicitly stipulated in the 1964 Palestinian national covenant.<sup>1208</sup> After the organization's founding, the Arab League seeks in vain to gain approval for a PLO representative in Switzerland by the Swiss authorities, which opposed the step. After its defeat against Israel in 1967, Egyptian dominance of Arab nationalism was significantly weakened. This forms the background of Fatah's takeover of the PLO in 1968. The PLO which settled in Switzerland in the late 1960s was therefore very different from the earlier PLO. Still, it maintained its close cooperation with the Arab League.

While the Fatah network in Europe at first directed the bulk of its activities towards the Arab diaspora, after 1967 it sought to reach out to the nascent student movement and the New Left. The latter's attitude towards Israel was much more hostile than that of

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<sup>1206</sup> "Union des Etudiants arabes," 10 May, 1968, CHBAR#E4320C#1994/120#782\*; "Contrôle téléphonique de El-Shamali, 17.07.1969-31.10.1969" (Service Politique du Corps de Police Genève, 26 November, 1969), CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1207</sup> "Letter by Zoher Kabbani to Federal Councillor Max Petitpierre," 25 June, 1957, CHBAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388\*.

<sup>1208</sup> Harold M. Cubert, *The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East* (London, 1997), 53.

the moderate, Social Democratic Left, a fact which facilitated the rapprochement.<sup>1209</sup> This development was also reflected in Switzerland where Fatah officials and the office of the Arab League in Geneva collaborated with the scene of Swiss anti-Zionist organizations. The most active organization in the campaign was the *Comité de Soutien au Peuple Palestinien* (Engl. Committee for the Support of the Palestinian People), which had been established in early 1969, right after the attack. It was headed by Pierre Louis Claude (b. 1937), a functionary of the communist Party of Labor,<sup>1210</sup> a party which received financial support from Moscow during the Cold War.<sup>1211</sup> Fatah representative Fuad al-Shamali became active in the committee in a leading role in September 1969 before the start of the trial.<sup>1212</sup> Shamali and the Arab League Office in Geneva counseled the *Comité* in its propaganda strategy, with the Office also organizing public events and printing and editing its propaganda. The secretary at the Office, who was of Syrian nationality, proved to be responsible for these activities.<sup>1213</sup> It is no overstatement to conclude that the *Comité de Soutien au Peuple Palestinien* was as much a project of the Arab League Office and of Fatah as it was one of its left-wing members.

Fatah propaganda and militant networks in Europe were overlapping. During the Six-Day War, the GUPS had recruited Arab students in Germany to partake in a guerilla

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<sup>1209</sup> For Germany's New Left, see Jeffrey Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967-1989* (Cambridge, 2016), 79–84.

<sup>1210</sup> "Bericht 'Schweizerische Vereinigungen für die Unterstützung arabischer Palästinenser'" (Office of the Attorney General, 1969), CHBAR#E2005A#1978/137#2078\*.

<sup>1211</sup> "Aus dem Innenleben der PDA," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, May 25, 2003, <https://www.nzz.ch/article8U945-1.257391>.

<sup>1212</sup> "Contrôle téléphonique de El-Shamali, 17.07.1969-31.10.1969."

<sup>1213</sup> "Contrôle téléphonique de la Délégation Permanente de la Ligue des Etats arabes, avenue Krieg 7, 12. 1. 1970 - 26. 7. 1970" (Service Politique du Corps de Police Genève, 31 July, 1970), CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

war against Israel.<sup>1214</sup> Most members of the New Left were young and fascinated by the adventurism associated with guerilla warfare. Fatah peddled this feeling by inviting young Leftists to its military training camps in Jordan. In mid-July 1969, New Left activists from all over Europe travelled to Jordan to receive military training and attend a congress by the General Union of the Palestinian Students. The GUPS was by then under control of Fatah and effectively turned into the youth branch of the PLO.<sup>1215</sup> The approximately 200 European volunteers were joined by a Swiss contingent of several Palestine Committee members, including its leader, Pierre Claude,<sup>1216</sup> which were selected by Fuad Shamali. Meanwhile, Shamali, who used the pseudonym Abu Said, was suspected of being involved in terrorism in Europe. A confidential source alleged him, inter alia, to be responsible for a bomb attack on the El Al office in Brussels on 8 September 1969.<sup>1217</sup> Furthermore, after his death in 1972, it was widely reported in European and Arab media that he had played a major role in planning the terror attacks of Black September, including the Munich massacre, underscoring Swiss suspicions.<sup>1218</sup> Shamali's case illustrates the blurred boundaries in Fatah's European network strategy propaganda and militancy.

Besides Palestine Committees, the Arab League also supported other anti-Zionist groups which did not fall into the camp of the New Left. Among those was the Lausanne branch of the *Comité de Soutien au Peuple Palestinien*, which eventually split from the movement. It was headed by the Frenchman and known anti-Semite, Roger Henry. Henry was a colorful figure who had volunteered to help the German occupying forces in France during World War II and was later active for the OAS, an underground

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<sup>1214</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 47.

<sup>1215</sup> Ibid., 51; Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel*, 98–99.

<sup>1216</sup> “Note sur le stage de militants révolutionnaires en Jordanie,” 11 August, 1969, CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1209\*.

<sup>1217</sup> “Rapport Sur Fouad-Assad El-Shamali” (Swiss Federal Police, September 10, 1969), CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1209\*.

<sup>1218</sup> Serge Groussard, *La Médaille de Sang* (Paris, 1973), 153–55.

paramilitary organization which opposed Algerian independence.<sup>1219</sup> Another such group was the more moderate Swiss-Arab Society, which was established in May 1969 and chaired by Hans Ellenberger. It was entirely dependent on the Arab League, which paid its secretary's wage. Its offices moreover were housed in the building of the Arab Commercial Bank.<sup>1220</sup> François Genoud was one of the bank's directors, which he had co-founded in 1958 with funds provided by wealthy Arabs, in particular from Saudi Arabia.<sup>1221</sup> Why did the Arabs proceed to establish and finance anti-Zionist front groups with Swiss leadership? Certainly, the Swiss leadership provided them with greater credibility towards their Swiss audience. Perhaps more importantly, Swiss law prohibited political activity by foreigners. The Arab League Office in Geneva had run into problems with the Swiss authorities several times in the past because of their propaganda activities against Western powers and Israel. Setting up Swiss front groups alleviated this problem. State support for propaganda networks offered similar gains to those received from supporting terror networks: "(...) *plausible deniability, the possibility to project power despite little geopolitical significance, and the enhancement of their image as fighters for the cause of the 'oppressed'*".<sup>1222</sup>

The investigation of the February attack and the subsequent trial took almost a year, lasting until December 1969. It pitted the Arab states, the Palestinian national movement and their sympathizers against Israel, the Jewish community and the majority of the Swiss population. Both sides invested significant prestige and energy

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<sup>1219</sup> "Bericht 'Schweizerische Vereinigungen für die Unterstützung arabischer Palästinenser'"; "Memo on Roger Henry." (Federal Police, July 31, 1970), CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/390#1211\*.

<sup>1220</sup> "Bericht 'Schweizerische Vereinigungen für die Unterstützung arabischer Palästinenser'"; "Contrôle téléphonique de la Délégation Permanente de la Ligue des Etats Arabes, avenue Krieg 7, 01.05.1969 - 30.06.1969" (Service Politique du Corps de Police Genève, June 21, 1969), CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1214\*.

<sup>1221</sup> Pean, *L'Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 228–29.

<sup>1222</sup> "Quid pro Quo: State Sponsorship of Terrorism in the Cold War," in *An International History of Terrorism. Western and Non-Western Experiences*, eds. Bernhard Blumenau and Jussi M. Hanhimäki, 2013, 119.

in the trial, underlining its character as a proxy battle for the larger Arab-Israeli conflict. Georges Brunschvig, the head of the Swiss Jewish community and a famous lawyer, defended the Israeli security officer Mordehai Rahamim, who was accused of manslaughter. Brunschvig had gained prominence through the Berne Trial in which he proved the falsity of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.<sup>1223</sup> He was assisted by Gabriel Bach, Israel's state attorney and former prosecutor in the Eichmann trial. On 22 December, the three Arabs were convicted to twelve years in prison, while the Israeli was acquitted. After the delivery of the judgement, Gabriel Bach expressed his hope that the sentence would set a precedent for future trials against terrorists. The team of Arab lawyers, which consulted the defense lawyer, however warned that *"the Swiss-Arab relations were at the beginning of a long winter."*<sup>1224</sup> The second statement would prove more accurate in the coming years.

The investigation and the subsequent trial was overshadowed by a campaign against the Swiss judiciary, which started in June 1969. It sought to disrupt the investigation and subvert the credibility of the Swiss judiciary by insinuating that it had a pro-Israeli bias.<sup>1225</sup> According to Peter Woog, the head of JUNA, the intelligence service which the Swiss Jewish community had set up in the 1940s during the Nazi threat, the first phase of the campaign was deliberated at a meeting of Roger Henry's Palestine Committee on 11 June. The disturbances were meant to prepare the ground for a second phase in the campaign, in which the Arab states would step in to pressure Switzerland.<sup>1226</sup> At a press conference on 14 June 1969, Roger Henry made serious allegations against the investigating authorities. Henry presented the journalists with parts of the investigation file against Mordehai Rahamim, claiming that the documents had been sold to a Palestinian organization for 5'000 dollars by someone inside the

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<sup>1223</sup> For the trial, see Hadassa Ben-Itto, *The Lie That Wouldn't Die: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Elstree, 2005), 269–349.

<sup>1224</sup> "So ging der El-Al-Prozess in Winterthur zu Ende," Tages Anzeiger, 22 December, 1969.

<sup>1225</sup> "Attentäter machen der Schweiz Sorgen," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 16 July, 1969.

<sup>1226</sup> Peter Woog, "Arabische Propaganda," Der Bund, 11 July, 1969.

office of the principal investigator. The Swiss defense lawyers also lodged a complaint against the principal investigator, asking him to abandon the case.<sup>1227</sup> As a result of these charges, Zurich's Director of Justice opened an investigation into the charges against the principal investigator, but speculated that Henry had probably gained access to the documents through the Arabs' defense lawyers.<sup>1228</sup> These however claimed to have had no connection with the campaign, but admitted to having been in touch with the Arab Lawyers Union.<sup>1229</sup> In a phone call between Henry and Shamali, which was tapped by the Geneva police, it was revealed that part of the documents had been photocopied by Shamali himself.<sup>1230</sup> Obviously, the alleged spy within the principal investigator's office was the Arab Lawyers Union itself, which had passed on the documents to Shamali. This was not the only effort to disrupt the investigation. The Arab interpreter, a Syrian refugee, was the repeated target of insinuations and accusations of pro-Israeli bias by the Arab side. In September 1969, the Syrian embassy demanded his removal from the trial.<sup>1231</sup> This call was joined by the pro-Arab organizations *Comité de Soutien et d'aide au Peuple Palestinien* and *Centrale Suisse d'Assistance à la Palestine* a few days later in a public letter, wherein they also demanded the release of the PFLP terrorists.<sup>1232</sup> The Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* meanwhile incited its readers by telling them that the interpreter was an Israeli.<sup>1233</sup>

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<sup>1227</sup> "Attentäter machen der Schweiz Sorgen."

<sup>1228</sup> "Strafuntersuchung gegen Bezirksanwaltschaft Bülach," *Volksrecht*, 15 July, 1969.

<sup>1229</sup> "Die angegriffenen Anwälte schiessen zurück," *Tages Anzeiger*, 16 July, 1969.

<sup>1230</sup> "Rapport Sur Fouad-Assad El-Shamali."

<sup>1231</sup> "Letter by the General Consulate of Syria to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs," 9 September, 1969, CHBAR# E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*.

<sup>1232</sup> "Letter by Comité Suisse de Soutien et d'Aide Au Peuple Palestinien' to Federal Councilor Willy Spühler," 13 September, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*.

<sup>1233</sup> "Les commandos de Zurich font la grève de la faim depuis 17 jours," *Al Ahram*, 13 September, 1969.

After the resignation of the two Swiss defense lawyers, the Arab Lawyers Union (ALU) agreed to convene a meeting at the end of September in Cairo to discuss the defense of Palestinian terrorists in Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Greece with representatives from the ALU, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan and the PLO.<sup>1234</sup> It is likely that not only the trial in Switzerland was discussed in this context, but the larger strategy for the defense of Palestinian terrorists in Europe. The strategy, which shaped the defense in Switzerland and other defenses organized by the ALU was characterized by public campaigning and the disruption of the regular trial process. Swiss authorities thus observed the use of the same tactic in a trial against PFLP terrorists in Greece in October 1969.<sup>1235</sup> This tactic is generally known by its French expression as '*défense de rupture*'. Jacques Vergès, a Franco-Algerian lawyer and a member of the ALU, pioneered the tactic in a trial against FLN operative Djamil Bouhired in 1957. Besides disruption, the tactic seeks to invert the roles of prosecutor and defendant. The courtroom is turned into a public stage on which the state stands accused for its alleged crimes. After the Cairo meeting, Vergès is made a member of the defense team for the PFLP operatives in Switzerland, which also includes the Moroccan lawyer Abderrahmane Youssoufi, a friend of François Genoud.<sup>1236</sup> However, to the disappointment of his supporters, he is only allowed to attend the trial as an observer and not as a regular defense lawyer.<sup>1237</sup> The Swiss Nazi and pro-Arab activist François Genoud may have had a role in bringing Vergès to Switzerland as he had known him since the 1960s, when his Arab Commercial Bank managed the funds of

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<sup>1234</sup> "Appel lancé à la croix rouge pour sauver les commandos qui font la grève de la faim depuis vingt jours," *Al Baath*, 16 September, 1969.

<sup>1235</sup> "Letter by Swiss Chargé D'affaires in Athens to Swiss Foreign Office on the Attack of an El-Al Airplane in Hellenikon," 7 October, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*.

<sup>1236</sup> Bernard Violet, *Vergès: Le Maître de l'ombre*, L'épreuve Des Faits (Paris, 2000), 167–69.

<sup>1237</sup> "Memo: Interrogation of Vergès," 16 December, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*; "Telex: Vergès Receives Safe Conduct," 16 December, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

the FLN.<sup>1238</sup> François Genoud's role in the campaign is murky. After speaking with the defendants and the president of courts, he explains to the press that he is simply an "*uninterested, voluntary aide to the defense of the Palestinians*".<sup>1239</sup> Unsurprisingly for such a mysterious figure, this seems to have been an understatement. Rather, he worked as an intermediary between different Middle Eastern actors. According to his biographer, during 1969 Genoud maintained regular contact with PFLP external operations chief Wadie Haddad in Beirut, the chef of the Libyan secret service, and Fuad Shamali in Geneva, travelling to the Middle East at least four times in 1969. Possibly, he acted as an informant. His presence at the trial however was a strategic mistake. It exposed the PFLP to accusations of harboring National Socialist and anti-Semitic sympathies.<sup>1240</sup>

Some Arab states, in particular Libya and Algeria, directly interfered in the trial. Libya sent two delegations in late November and early December to speak with the defendants.<sup>1241</sup> The court expressed concern, noting that the defendants became less cooperative after the first Libyan visit. However, the stance of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs prevailed; they hoped that the Libyans would act in "*a calming manner on the Arab countries*".<sup>1242</sup> In the same period of time, Algeria also intervened. On 28 November, the Algerian foreign minister Bouteflika criticized the trial harshly and asked Secretary General U Thant to have the UN intervene on behalf of the defendants.<sup>1243</sup> Three days later, on 1<sup>st</sup> December, a prominent Algerian delegation met with U Thant

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<sup>1238</sup> Laske, *Ein Leben zwischen Hitler und Carlos*, 171.

<sup>1239</sup> *Ibid.*, 228–29.

<sup>1240</sup> Pean, *L'Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 321.

<sup>1241</sup> "Note for the Federal Prosecutor's Office," 1 December, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1242</sup> Walder Hans, "Letter from Attorney General Hans Walder to Court President Hans Gut," 9 December, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1243</sup> "Note for the Federal Prosecutor's Office."



to reemphasize their demands.<sup>1244</sup> As mentioned above, Algeria was also strongly represented in the ALU defense team with Jacques Vergès and Amar Bentoumi, then the president of the bar in Algeria. What was the reason for Algeria and Libya's involvement? After Egypt's defeat in the Six-Day War, its claim to leadership of the pan-Arab movement was significantly weakened and other Arab states vied for this position, among them Algeria. Besides an expression of the authentic feeling of solidarity with the Palestinians, this tactic also had the useful effect of increasing one's prestige in the Arab public opinion. Algeria had exploited this effect since the mid-1960s, when it played a pioneering role in supporting the PLO diplomatically and militarily.<sup>1245</sup> Libya did not count among the most radical Arab regimes before 1969. In September of this year however, the monarchy was overthrown. The military junta under Colonel Gaddafi, which succeeded it, was one of the most radical Arab nationalist and anti-Western in the Middle East. Like Algeria, it co-opted Palestinian nationalism to increase its standing vis-à-vis its Arab competitors.<sup>1246</sup> The Arab League summit in Rabat on 20 December 1969 gave further impetus to Algeria and Libya to style themselves as the defenders of the Palestinians, something the Swiss ambassador in Algiers was very aware of. He therefore advised the Swiss authorities not to call out the Algerians publicly and increase the tensions, but to collaborate with them, as *"we have an interest (...) to play the game, although we know, that sometimes a false card slips in."*<sup>1247</sup> Rather than fighting the interference of Arab states in domestic matters, the Swiss authorities did their best to accommodate their demands in order to cushion the blow of the campaign.

Both the domestic and the external campaign were meant to discredit the Swiss investigative authorities in the public eye and to paint the picture of a Swiss judiciary

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<sup>1244</sup> "ONU: Déclaration du représentant d'Algérie," Algérie Presse Service, 2 December, 1969.

<sup>1245</sup> Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, 31–32.

<sup>1246</sup> Jacob Abadi, *Pragmatism and Rhetoric in Libya's Policy Toward Israel*, *Journal of Conflict Studies* 20/2 (August 8, 2000).

<sup>1247</sup> "Rapports algéro-suisses dans le contexte de la politique algérienne," 8 December, 1969, CHBAR#E2001E#1980/83#921\*.

biased in favor of the Israelis. Arabic media contributed to this acerbic climate. Many had sent special correspondents to cover the trial in Winterthur. One of them, a journalist for the Syrian newspaper *al-Baath*, designed a conspiracy theory obviously inspired by the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to explain the alleged Swiss discrimination against the Arab defendants: *Following the June War 1967 [Six-Day War], when a congress of about 70 international billionaires took place in Jerusalem to examine the possibilities to finance the new 'Israeli Empire' and when talk was there of about 1'500 billions of old French francs, the Swiss delegations came as 5<sup>th</sup> among the 14 capitalist countries represented at the congress.*<sup>1248</sup> The Iraqi newspaper *Al-Jumhuriya* called for reprisals against Switzerland to “*make them understand that the Arab nation cannot be despised (...).*”<sup>1249</sup> Swiss pro-Arab activists, acting in a role of ‘native informants’, helped stoke this deleterious climate. On October 2 1969, Hans Ellenberger and Roger Du Pasquier of the Swiss-Arab Society travelled to Egypt to meet with senior figures. Among others, they spoke to the editor in chief of the Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram*, to whom they gave advice on the Swiss mentality and how best to convince the Swiss public. Writing about this encounter one day later, the editor in chief reported that the Swiss had asked him for support, because “*the influence of Zionism is efficient in the Swiss sphere of information, which, while concealing the Arab point of view, supports forcefully the Israeli point of view.*”<sup>1250</sup> These newspaper articles were registered by the Swiss authorities and added to the feeling of being under siege.

The local and the external actors worked together to increase the pressure on Switzerland and prevent the normal course of the investigation. One of the external actors was the PFLP, which continued to intimidate Switzerland to secure the release of the terrorists. A letter on 24 August made exactly this demand. The letter, the content of which revealed that the organization had intimate knowledge of the events in Switzerland and was closely monitoring the situation, accused the Swiss authorities of

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<sup>1248</sup> “L’interdiction de toute manifestation oratoire n’atteint pas les Sionistes,” *Al Baath*, 1 December, 1969, CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1214\*.

<sup>1249</sup> “Switzerland... Persistence on Wrong,” *Al-Jumhuriya*, 15 September, 1969.

<sup>1250</sup> A.H. El-Gammal, “Editorial,” *Al Ahram*, 8 October, 1969.

being involved in a “*Zionist complot*.”<sup>1251</sup> It is likely that François Genoud played a role in informing the PFLP on the situation in Switzerland. He had been in touch with Wadie Haddad since early 1969 and occasionally travelled to Beirut to meet with him.<sup>1252</sup> Since mid-September 1969, signs were increasing that the PFLP was preparing a new round of violence against Switzerland. The authorities first received a credible warning of an imminent hijacking of a Swissair machine.<sup>1253</sup> Then, on 19 September, the PFLP in Amman issued a communique calling for an improvement of prisoner conditions in Switzerland and warning of possible revenge.<sup>1254</sup> In early October, PFLP spokesman Ghassan Khanfani proclaimed to the press that the group was considering the abduction of a Swiss ambassador to create a “*climate of understanding*” with the Swiss authorities.<sup>1255</sup> The next PFLP terror attacks however did not target Switzerland, but Athens on 27 November. In early December, the authorities received another warning of a terror attack, this time on Swiss soil,<sup>1256</sup> possibly on the trial in Winterthur. Then, on 21 December 1969, hardly by coincidence just one day before the passing of judgment, an attempt to hijack a TWA machine in Athens failed.<sup>1257</sup> This was just a

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<sup>1251</sup> “Letter by the PFLP to the Swiss Honorary Consul in Kowait,” 24 July, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*; “Letter from from Michel Gelzer (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) to Attorney General Hans Walder,” December 4, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1252</sup> Pean, *L’Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 321.

<sup>1253</sup> “Memo for the Federal Office of Police on Planned Airplane Hijackings,” September 16, 1969, CHBAR# E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*.

<sup>1254</sup> “Warning from the Popular Front to the Swiss Authorities,” *Al Nour*, September 20, 1969.

<sup>1255</sup> “Memo on Possible Plans of the PFLP to Kidnap a Swiss Ambassador,” October 7, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*.

<sup>1256</sup> “Memo by Federal Office of Police,” December 9, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*; “Memo by the Federal Office of Police,” December 11, 1969, CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1257</sup> “Les trois libanais appréhendés dimanche à l’aéroport d’Athènes risquent au moins 20 ans de prison,” *Le Progrès Egyptien*, December 23, 1969.

small foretaste of what was to come for Switzerland in 1970. Unbeknownst to the public, Switzerland was already preparing for the next emergency.

## 6.7 Conclusion

When the Arab League started reviving its propaganda apparatus in the early 1950s, it first concentrated its activities on the US. This reflected the fact that the Arabs still considered the US to be the prime arena of the fight against Zionism. They also enjoyed a wide range of sympathizers there, many of them from the far-right, a fact which the Arab League often sought to downplay. In addition, the Eisenhower administration had created a fertile atmosphere for pro-Arab activism, given its policy to improve relations with the Arab world. Nevertheless, the Arab propaganda activities in the US achieved no lasting impact. This was certainly a factor for the Arab League to expand its activities in Europe and the Third World.

The Arab League opened its first Offices in Europe in Bonn and Geneva in 1956 and 1957, respectively. The Geneva Arab Office served as the headquarters in Europe. This underscored the relevance of these countries in the Arab League strategy. Unlike in the US, Hassan Fakoussa fostered collaboration with the far-right. The same procedure was followed in Switzerland, where the Liberation Nationalists established a pro-Arab group with the money and support of the Arab League. The primary concern for these Offices was always to spread awareness on the Palestine issue. Since the mid-1960s, PLO representatives were attached to the Arab Offices. Still, before the Six-Day War, Arab propaganda failed to appeal to the general public and pro-Arab sympathies ran low. This changed only after the Six-Day War, when Arab League functionaries like Fayez Sayegh realized the need to address other elements of the public, in particular the New Left. The case study has shed light on this new strategy. The Arab League was instrumental in establishing, funding and maintaining an anti-Zionist network in Switzerland. Without this support, domestic pressure on Switzerland to change its policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict would expectedly have been much more limited.

## 7 The PLO Network in Europe and Palestine Solidarity

The following chapter describes the networks of pro-Arab activism in Germany, the UK and Switzerland in the 1960s and 1970s, concentrating on the period from 1967 to 1974. Other European countries, including France, Italy and Belgium, are also discussed. The defeat of the Arab armies in the Six-Day War weakened Arab nationalism. In an unexpected turn of events, it did however embolden the Palestinian National movement led by the PLO and its chairman, Yasser Arafat. Its military and political struggle against Israel culminated in the recognition of Palestinian national rights and the PLO by the UN General Assembly on November 23, 1974 and six years later by the European Community. This chapter will contribute to the understanding of this success. In the early 1960s, the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) and Fatah built up their presence in Europe. The Palestinian cause underwent a revolution in this period. Their main base was Germany. From there, they not only recruited Palestinian and other Arab students for the struggle against Israel, but also soon exerted influence on the nascent New Left movement and its attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. After 1967, there developed a de facto alliance between the different Palestinian paramilitary groups which were part of the PLO and the European New Left. This alliance gave rise to a ramified Palestine solidarity movement, which lobbied for Palestinian national interests in Europe. Some of these groups were funded by Arab bodies and acted as front groups. Many radical leftists would also join the military struggle of the Palestinian nationalists or support their terrorist operations in Europe. Besides the wave of New Left activism, there was also a diplomatic offensive by the PLO in European capitals. By pushing for the opening of official representations of the PLO, the PLO and the Arab League sought to normalize the PLO and achieve international recognition. The Swiss and the British governments, the negotiations of which are discussed in this chapter, were open to accommodate these demands in principle, thereby seeking to prevent violence against their citizens and improving their ties with the Arab world. This comprehensive strategy, which encompassed propaganda, diplomacy, economic threats and violence, eventually brought the PLO to be recognized by the Europeans as an indispensable partner for achieving peace in the Middle East.

## 7.1 Fatah and the GUPS in Germany

The General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) organized the pro-Palestinian solidarity movement in Germany in the 1960s and the early 1970s. While GUPS later became the youth branch of Fatah, both started as independent organizations with similar outlooks. Like the GUPS, Fatah was established as a youth movement and to a significant degree remained so, recruiting its cadre primarily among the Palestinian student groups existing in the Arab and European diaspora. The oldest and most important one of these groups was the Palestinian Student Association, which had been established at Cairo University in 1944. Until 1952, it was headed by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). In 1952, the unaffiliated Yasser Arafat took it over as chairman. However, the influence of the MB remained strong. For one, Arafat's deputy Salah Khalaf, also known as Abu Iyad, was associated with the movement. Arafat promised that he would promote the MB's ideology and members in exchange for the MB's support for his candidacy. On the other hand, Arafat also claimed kinship with the Mufti Amin al-Husseini, earning him the respect of the Islamists but suspicion from the Arab nationalists. Arafat's takeover of the association and his crafting of alliances already hinted at his diplomatic genius, which would become even more evident later. Soon, Arafat expanded the association to other universities in the bustling Egyptian capital and beyond. But Arafat was also eyeing international status for the student association. In 1955, it gained admittance to the communist-controlled International Union of Students, recognition from the Arab League and the Arab states as an official Palestinian body. When Arafat moved to Kuwait in 1957, he left Palestinian student politics significantly strengthened. Arafat and his entourage from the Egyptian student days would form the core of the Palestinian national movement in the decades to come. Among those were Salah Khalaf, Farouk Kaddoumi and others.<sup>1258</sup>

In 1959, Arafat and his colleagues established *Fatah* (Engl. victory, conquest). Many of its founding members were close to the Muslim Brotherhood. Though the organization made repeated reference to Islamic history in its propaganda, it adopted an ideology and language influenced by pan-Arabism and anti-imperialism. In Fatah's view, Arab unity would not bring the demise of Israel, like Nasser thought, but to the

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<sup>1258</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 15–18.

contrary, Arab unity would be achieved through the Arab struggle against and the eventual demise of Israel.<sup>1259</sup> Their glorification of violent action as a means of unification marked them as true students of Frantz Fanon, the French intellectual, whose thought had a powerful influence on the anti-imperialist movement and the New Left. In violent-collective action “*each one becomes the violent member of a big chain, the great organism of violence, which surges against the initial violence of the colonizer [...] and thus creates a nation of inseparable unity.*”<sup>1260</sup> Fanon ascribed a purifying, liberating quality to violence. Indeed, early Fatah propaganda material was directly influenced by Fanon, explicitly quoting from his work ‘*Wretched of the Earth*’. Fatah sought to prompt a new war between Israel and its Arab neighbors by staging guerrilla attacks against the Jewish state. Israel would react to these provocations against the Arab states, which would eventually lead to war. Fatah’s raids were indeed a trigger for the Six-Day War. But unlike Fatah had hoped, it did not result in a unifying victory, but rather a crushing defeat for the Arabs. While the Arab states did not, Fatah profited from the war. As the Arab armies lost their prestige, guerrilla-fighting and terror emerged as the winning strategies against Israel. Moreover, the weakened position of Egypt and especially Nasser allowed Fatah to take over the PLO, with Yasser Arafat being elected chairman of the executive committee in February 1969.<sup>1261</sup> The Battle of Karameh, although a defeat from the military viewpoint, heightened Arafat’s prestige tremendously. Egyptian dictator Nasser met with Arafat and other leading members of Fatah and took Arafat on a state visit to Moscow. Fatah dominated the executive committee of the PLO. In the words of later PLO representative in Germany, Abdallah Frangi, the PLO was the vehicle but Fatah was the engine.<sup>1262</sup>

Both GUPS and Fatah sprang from the same roots. In 1959, two years after Arafat’s departure for Kuwait in 1957, the various Palestinian Student Associations in Egypt united to form the GUPS, which was headquartered in Cairo. Soon thereafter, GUPS

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<sup>1259</sup> Mannes, *Profiles in Terror*, 222–23.

<sup>1260</sup> Cited after Hannah Arendt, *Macht und Gewalt*, trans. Gisela Uellenberg (München: Piper Taschenbuch, 2011), 62.

<sup>1261</sup> Mannes, *Profiles in Terror*, 223–26.

<sup>1262</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 150–51.

established ties with other student associations in Beirut and Damascus. In the early 1960s, GUPS expanded to Europe. The chapters in Europe would have an influential role in the further development of the GUPS. However, the leading chapter was undoubtedly the West German one, where GUPS was present since the early 1960s. Its activities were first directed at the numerous Arab students located in West Germany. Between 1962 and 1964 alone, 873 events were held.<sup>1263</sup> GUPS was led by a group of Palestinians studying at German universities. In the 1960s, it was chaired by Hani Hassan, who was assisted by Hayel Abdel Hamid. In this period, Fatah planned to take over GUPS. Fatah senior member Abu Jihad therefore commissioned Abdallah Frangi, a young Palestinian medical student from Gaza at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, to recruit Hani Hassan in 1963. This was the start of the Fatah cell in Frankfurt, which Arafat called “*the German gang*”.<sup>1264</sup> Besides Frangi and Hassan, it consisted of Amin al-Hindi, Hayel Abdel Hamid and Nabil Nasser, an Israeli born to a Jewish mother and an Arab Christian father. Apart from Nabil Nasser, all of them would later carve out brilliant careers in the ranks of Fatah: Hassan became Fatah’s chief of foreign policy, Hindi the head of the secret service, and Hayel Abdel Hamid a member of the Fatah Central Committee, while Frangi represented the PLO in Germany for more than three decades. The Frankfurt cell was instrumental in the expansion of GUPS, which soon counted 24 chapters of the GUPS and another 26 of the GUPA, the General Union of Palestinian Workers (Ger. *Generalunion palästinensischer Arbeiter*).<sup>1265</sup> This was an impressive accomplishment.

However, it was questionable whether these leaders really had ever been serious students. It was easy in these years to get admitted to a German university. Hayel Abdel Hamid or Fatah’s senior military officer Walim Nasir never seriously committed themselves to their studies.<sup>1266</sup> Abdallah Frangi noted in his autobiography that he was mostly absent from his lessons and did not earn a degree.<sup>1267</sup> This suggests that rather

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<sup>1263</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 36–37.

<sup>1264</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 98–99.

<sup>1265</sup> *Ibid.*, 100–101.

<sup>1266</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 49 (n. 44).

<sup>1267</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 103.



than student activists, these figures were professional revolutionaries, Fatah officers who earned a living with their work. The German branch represented a crucial base of support for Fatah, a fact which was underlined by regular visits from Fatah's senior members, including Abu Jihad and Mahmoud Abbas. It would also serve as a model for the set-up of GUPS chapters in other European countries.<sup>1268</sup> Among others, GUPS chapters were latter opened in Italy and in France, where a chapter was established in 1965.<sup>1269</sup> GUPS was a significant force behind the ascendancy of Palestinian nationalism in the 1960s.

Growing militancy marked Palestinian nationalism. The third GUPS congress in February 1964 in Cairo was a major step towards the militarization of the student movement. The German GUPS representative Hayel Abdel Hamid was elected to the executive committee, the first Fatah member to do so. The congress resolution embraced armed fight against Israel as the only means to regain Palestine.<sup>1270</sup> On December 31, 1964, Fatah announced the start of military operations under the label of *al-Asifa* (Engl. the storm).<sup>1271</sup> Despite earlier declarations, the PLO headquarters in Cairo refrained from supporting the call.<sup>1272</sup> Its decision certainly reflected Gamal Nasser's apprehension of the military adventurism of the Palestinian *Fedayeen*, armed guerilla groups. He feared that they would lead him into a war with Israel, for which his army was entirely unprepared as it was bogged down in a costly war in Yemen.<sup>1273</sup>

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<sup>1268</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>1269</sup> Abdellali Hajjat, "Les Comités Palestine (1970-1972). Aux Origines Du Soutien de La Cause Palestinienne En France.," *Revue d'études Palestiniennes* hiver, no. 98 (2006): 83.

<sup>1270</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 26–27.

<sup>1271</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Clarendon Press, 1997), 107.

<sup>1272</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 34.

<sup>1273</sup> On the intervention in Yemen and its catastrophic effects on Egypt, see Jesse Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

The German GUPS on the other hand joined the military effort and in consequence, Germany became a major recruiting ground for the guerillas. Walim Nasir was Fatah's senior military officer in Germany, reporting to Abu Jihad. Being stationed in Frankfurt, he assumed a cover name and pretended to be a regular student. Nasir recruited Palestinian students in Germany to fight for Fatah. The same procedure was followed in France, where students were directly recruited for military and other functions at their home universities. The volunteers were then trained in Fatah camps, where they learnt the use of live ammunition and explosives.<sup>1274</sup>

The Six-Day War saw a further explosion of militancy in the GUPS. At the war's outbreak, Abu Jihad was staying in Frankfurt. On his incentive, the GUPS decided to send Arab volunteers from Frankfurt to participate in guerilla actions against Israel. Twenty volunteers from Germany, among them Abdallah Frangi, travelled to Algeria to undergo basic military training at a camp near Blida. They had not yet finished their training when the war ended on June 10, 1967. After two weeks in the Algerian camp, the group was transferred to Damascus, where they continued their training for another two weeks. The group met Arafat on July 28, 1967, before infiltrating the West Bank via Jordan.<sup>1275</sup> Frangi's group was not the only one. The German GUPS had organized the trips for volunteers from other European states as well. About 50 foreign fighters made it to the battle zone. These arrangements were overseen by Farouk Kaddoumi. Most of the European volunteers however were quickly arrested after they infiltrated the West Bank, including Abdallah Frangi, Walim Nasir, Ahmad Irshid from Karlsruhe and Ghazi al-Husseini from Cologne.<sup>1276</sup> The Israelis eventually set Frangi free after four months.<sup>1277</sup> GUPS chapters in the Arab world also participated in the campaign. Thus, GUPS in Lebanon fielded 120 volunteers with the same dismal results.<sup>1278</sup> After the war, Fatah gained control over the GUPS and its members joined the armed struggle against Israel, and Arab students from Germany continued to volunteer for the

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<sup>1274</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 40–42.

<sup>1275</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 106–19.

<sup>1276</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 47.

<sup>1277</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 106–19.

<sup>1278</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 45–46.

Fatah guerilla war.<sup>1279</sup> Two of those, Ribhi Muhammed Husayn and Muhammed Samaro, met their deaths at the iconic Battle of Karamah in March 1968. Although suffering heavy casualties, Fatah propaganda framed the military engagement as a victory over the Israelis, who had retreated after destroying a Fatah camp.<sup>1280</sup> One month before, Abdallah Frangi had participated in a meeting of the Fatah Central Committee in Damascus, where he criticized the military preparations as insufficient. Moreover, he suggested the use of GUPS as a role model for building up an effective military organization.<sup>1281</sup> While the military achievement of the GUPS leaders remained limited, they would prove to be much more successful in the field of propaganda.

## 7.2 The GUPS and the New Left Student movement

In the second half of the 1960s, GUPS activities in Germany increasingly targeted German students. They therefore came to the attention of the public. In 1965, the GUPS and the German branch of the Arab Student Union, which, according to Swiss information was an Egyptian front organization, planned to hold a conference on Palestine and the Arab word. After an intervention by Tunisia, which feared criticism of its policies, the conference was prevented by German authorities.<sup>1282</sup> On July 1, 1966, 130 persons, most of them Arab students from the University of Erlangen-Nurnberg, took to the streets for a silent march in protest against the German-Israeli weeks starting on the same day. Behind the march stood the GUPS and the Arab Student Union. The slogans on the banners of the protestors were in German and designed to appeal to the public, such as “*Jerusalem, Berlin: Wall, grief, injustice*” or “*Palestine was, is and will be Arabic.*”<sup>1283</sup> The Arab students received expressions of solidarity from the Afro-Asiatic Student Union and the Iranian Student Association. The march was however criticized as anti-Semitic in a letter to the editor in the pages of the local

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<sup>1279</sup> Chapter *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>1280</sup> Chapter *ibid.*

<sup>1281</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 127.

<sup>1282</sup> Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 40.

<sup>1283</sup> “Araber protestieren gegen Israel. Aus: Erlanger Volksblatt, 2. Juli 1966,” *Arabische Korrespondenz*, July 23, 1966, 15–17.

newspaper *Erlanger Volksblatt*. In response, the editor received pro-Arab letters from Mahmud Sharif of the GUPS and two German students, who were obviously outraged at the charge. Their letter stated: *"We have to fear that in our country political extremism is nowhere near going extinct, with the single difference, that the erstwhile anti-Semitism, which we condemn from the bottom of our hearts, has turned today into an equally extreme uncritical philosemitism."*<sup>1284</sup>

This was an argument often used later by the New Left. According to its reasoning, the real anti-anti-Semites were those who supported the enemies of Israel. This was an adventurous, but nevertheless popular argument among the anti-Zionist New Left, which can be encountered in various sources. Among others, the Marxist political scientist Wolfgang Abendroth would adopt it after 1967, as discussed in more detail below. Philosemitism in the FRG had been criticized in a 1965 article by the Jewish political scientist Eleonore Sterling in the reputed newspaper *Die Zeit*, that probably contributed to the popularity of the theme among the New Left. However, Sterling's critique was very different from that of the New Left and did not target supporters of Israel. She criticized philosemitism as an inauthentic expression of sympathy for the Jews which actually had little to do with the existence of real Jews, and was adopted rather to improve the image and credibility of the young German democracy vis-à-vis its Western partners. Her critique was particularly directed at the representation of the Jew as a sufferer, as an "Auschwitz-Jew", in German discourse, which mythologized the Holocaust.<sup>1285</sup> In fact, it would be more correct to apply Sterling's critique of philosemitism to the New Left: As seen in the letter of the two students at Erlangen-Nürnberg, it expressed sympathy for the dead Jews of Auschwitz, but offered very little understanding for the living Jews, particularly in Israel, but also in other countries like the Soviet Union, where they suffered from oppression.

The Arab defeat in 1967 led to intensive soul-searching in the Arab countries. As shown in the previous chapter, one reason for Israel's strength, they believed, lay in Western public support for Israel. The Palestine Research Center in Beirut, a body of

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<sup>1284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1285</sup> Eleonore Sterling, "Judenfreunde – Judenfeinde," *Die Zeit*, December 10, 1965, <http://www.zeit.de/1965/50/judenfreunde-judenfeinde>.

the PLO, equally came to the conclusion that the Arab cause was misrepresented in Western media.<sup>1286</sup> The logical conclusion of this analysis was to step up propaganda in Western countries. Increasingly, this propaganda did not seek to sway the opinion of the majority, which was unwinnable, as Fayez Sayegh believed, but targeted the New Left and marginalized groups. Germany offers a particularly good example for this approach. GUPS clearly intensified its propaganda after 1967, seeking to establish links with the New Left.<sup>1287</sup> Abdallah Frangi, who had returned to Frankfurt after his incarceration in Israel, was elected president of the GUPS in 1968. He further professionalized the GUPS and opened a central office in the center of the Frankfurt, the rent of which was paid for by the Arab League. Nabil Nasser started editing a new magazine called *Resistenza*, which was later renamed *Palästina-Hefte*. The first name was deliberately chosen to evoke the memory of the French resistance against the German occupation. This was part of a concerted effort to align Fatah with the New Left, which defined itself as anti-fascist. The 'German gang' also established the *Palästina-Komitees* (Engl. Palestine committees) in many universities in Germany, recruiting its members among left-wing students and opponents of the Vietnam War. GUPS also joined the pacifist *Ostermärsche*, which were staged each year to protest against the dangers of nuclear war. Although Frangi feared that the militantly nationalistic Fatah did not fit well with the supposedly pacifist message of the event, this proved unfounded. The allegedly pacifist demonstrators quickly adopted the slogans of the movement and their symbol, the keffiyeh.<sup>1288</sup> GUPS had made its first inroads into the German Left.

The outreach of the GUPS towards the Left was facilitated by a significant change in the attitude of parts of the German Left during the Six-Day War of 1967, when the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* SDS (Engl. Socialist German Student Union) broke with the hitherto dominant pro-Israeli consensus in the German Left. Agitation against Israel had until now mainly originated from groups associated with the far-right and National Bolshevism, as shown above. However, more than in other European

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<sup>1286</sup> Palestine Research Center, *Essays on the American Public Opinion and the Palestine Problem*. (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1969).

<sup>1287</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 36–37.

<sup>1288</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 134–40.

countries, the German pro-Palestinian activists had to come to terms with the Holocaust. A flyer authored by the Marxist professor Wolfgang Abendroth, which was circulated by the SDS in June 1967 offered a dialectic solution: German “*philosemitism*”, meaning that support for the Jews and Israel stemmed from anti-Semitic attitudes. Ergo, support for Israel was in fact anti-Semitic. The U-turn of the far-left was laid down in a resolution, which was accepted at an SDS meeting in Frankfurt from September 4 to 9, which stated in language strongly reminiscent of the language of the Eastern European communist regimes that the conflict represented “*a struggle of the Arab peoples against their oppression by Anglo-American imperialism*.”<sup>1289</sup> In accordance with Abendroth’s thesis, the SDS claimed that the reporting of the Springer Press, a publishing house friendly to Israel, applied anti-Semitism to the Arabs. However, Jeffrey Herf, who studied National Socialist anti-Semitic propaganda extensively, found no parallels. In fact, the two hallmarks of modern anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories and racialism, were entirely absent from the Springer reports.<sup>1290</sup> On June 9, 1969, the SDS and GUPS protested in Frankfurt against a lecture by the Israeli ambassador Asher Ben-Natan at the university, silencing him by shouting abusive slogans such as “*Zionists out of Israel*.” Before he left, he remarked that “*It would be an historic event, if you would make this discussion today impossible, as this has happened in Germany the last time 34 years ago*.”<sup>1291</sup> These occurrences led to discussions in German newspapers on the anti-Semitic nature of the New Left and had Herbert Marcuse, whom many adherents of the New Left adored, fearing that the students were moving towards fascism.<sup>1292</sup> For the GUPS however, the SDS position was a major success.

The alliance between GUPS and the SDS was spearheaded by Amin al-Hindi, the GUPS leader in Frankfurt. In August 1969, about 50 SDS members joined their European comrades for a trip to Jordan, where they visited Fatah camps, received

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<sup>1289</sup> Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel*, 79–84.

<sup>1290</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>1291</sup> Kloeke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 78.

<sup>1292</sup> Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel*, 97–98.

military training and attended the Fifth Congress of the GUPS.<sup>1293</sup> Not only because of the attendance of European volunteers was the congress a success for Fatah. Amin al Hindi was elected GUPS chairman and Fatah expanded its majority in the GUPS executive committee.<sup>1294</sup> Fatah now controlled both the GUPS and the PLO. The German pro-Palestinians were joined by leftists from all over Europe. Among them were forty-eight young Britons, many of them from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Arguments between Maoists and Trotskyists, who were critical of Fatah and tended to identify with the PFLP, soon led to a split in the movement.<sup>1295</sup> Fatah representative in Switzerland Fuad El-Shamali also arranged for six left-wing students from Switzerland to be sent to Jordan.<sup>1296</sup> These GUPS conferences and training camps were an ideal opportunity to link up with Europe's adventure-seeking New Left. It was an experience which was filled with revolutionary romanticism. GUPS also used these events to link up with Irish nationalists. In 1970, Mairin de Burca from Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, Sean Ryan, the head of the Irish-Arab friendship society and Jim Hamilton from the Union of Students were invited to attend the yearly GUPS congress from September 2 - 6 in Amman. Kuwait paid for their expenses. At every occasion, de Burca sought to link up the fight of the Palestinians with that of the Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland. The British embassy warned that Sinn Fein had exhausted all possibilities of peaceful protest against Israel and might therefore be tempted "*to emulate the hijacking their Arab friends practise with such notorious impunity.*"<sup>1297</sup> One journalist called the event "*a veritable guerrilla Disneyland*", since the congress was overshadowed by regular confrontations between the Fedayeen and the Jordanian army, a portent of the coming Jordanian Civil War.<sup>1298</sup> After the conclusion of the

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<sup>1293</sup> Ibid., 98–99.

<sup>1294</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 51.

<sup>1295</sup> Rich, *The Left's Jewish Problem*, 84.

<sup>1296</sup> "Bericht 'Schweizerische Vereinigungen für die Unterstützung arabischer Palästinenser.'"

<sup>1297</sup> British Embassy Dublin, "Memo on the Irish-Arab Friendship Society" (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, September 22, 1970), FCO 95/961.

<sup>1298</sup> "To Amman and Back," *This Week*, September 24, 1970, FCO 95/961.

congress, the attendants had trouble returning back to Europe. Germany refused entry to one of the last machines departing for Frankfurt, and the flight had to be rerouted. The European attendants eventually arrived in Europe only after a long odyssey.<sup>1299</sup>

In the years between 1967 and 1970, the German New Left's Israeli enmity rapidly escalated. While the SDS had called for a pro-Arab-oriented neutrality in the 1967 war, only three years later, it openly advocated the destruction of Israel; it did so in a demonstration call by SDS Frankfurt on the occasion of the Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Ebban in 1970 in Bonn. On the one side, there was Israel, which was "*economically and politically parasitic (...) with his imperialist function*", "*chauvinistic and racist*", on the other side the Palestinian resistance, which was supported by the "*Arab and peaceful people as well as the progressive and socialist forces in Europe and the US.*"<sup>1300</sup> This simple, Manichean world-view not only marked the German New Left but was internationally widespread. After 1967, the classification of Israeli Jews as an "*oppressor nationality*" vis-à-vis the "*oppressed Palestinians*" gained traction among the New Left, especially among Trotskyists. For instance, the thousand attendants at the national convention of the American Trotskyist *Socialist Workers Party* in 1971, the most influential socialist group in the USA, followed this line of thought and therefore decided that the Jews had no right of self-determination and their state was to be destroyed. The convention resolution declared: *The struggle against anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews in other countries is a progressive struggle directed against their oppressors. (...) The Israeli Jews form an oppressor nationality of a settler-colonial character vis-a-vis the Arab peoples.*<sup>1301</sup> The resolution defined anti-Semitism in the same anti-imperialist terms as the struggle between oppressor nations and oppressed nations. Consequently, it recognized the fight against anti-Semitism as a progressive cause. However, because the Israeli Jews allegedly formed an oppressor nation in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it denied the reality of anti-Semitism as

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<sup>1299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1300</sup> Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 80.

<sup>1301</sup> Werner Cohn, "From Victim to Shylock and Oppressor: The New Image of the Jew in the Trotskyist Movement," *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 7, no. 1 (1991): 46–68.



a factor in the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to conform to anti-imperialist theory. The German New Left was equally ignorant vis-à-vis the issue of anti-Semitism. Moreover, it showed a tendency toward a form of anti-Semitism which is widespread in Germany: Secondary anti-Semitism. After the protests against the visit of the Shah during which a student was shot by a policeman, the socialist student movement presented itself as the new Jews. An SDS press release after the manifestations identified the students as the “*Jews’ of anti-Communism.*”<sup>1302</sup> For the New Left, the ‘Jew’ was a metaphor for the victim of oppression. It paid little attention to the existence of the living Jew and even less to the Jew in his nation state, the Israeli.

This anti-imperialist understanding of nationality or people is problematic in itself, merging the concepts of class and ethnicity. Whereas the imperialist metropolis, i.e. the Western states, are understood as complex, class-based societies, the societies of the peripheries are represented as a largely homogenous, oppressed body. Only at the price of enormous simplification and obfuscation can the clear distinction between oppressor nations and oppressed nations be upheld.<sup>1303</sup> It is worth pointing out that similar concepts have informed the politics of genocide. Thus, the claim that non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were economic parasites led to the concept of the National Economy and its implementation by the Young Turks in 1913 – the economic disfranchisement then preceded the murder of the Empire’s Christian minorities.<sup>1304</sup> The Holocaust predicated on similar arguments. The German scholar Claudia Globisch has found a connection between anti-Western, anti-modern and anti-Semitic worldviews in anti-Imperialist New Left German writing. The national collective of the Jews, Israel, is associated with all the supposed vices of the West; racism, fascism, capitalism, colonialism and sexism. In contrast, anti-imperialist thinkers tend to portray the Arabs or Palestinians as a homogeneously oppressed people, ignoring the social

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<sup>1302</sup> Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 123.

<sup>1303</sup> Claudia Globisch, *Radikaler Antisemitismus* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2013), 301–5, <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-531-93156-2>.

<sup>1304</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser, “World War and World Revolution: Alexander Helphand-Parvus in Germany and Turkey,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 2 (2011): 400.

and political tensions within these groups. Although the anti-imperialist Left generally tends to refrain from using the notion “*Jewish*”, it repeatedly refers to the Jewish identity of Israel and uses many of the stereotypes directly borrowed from anti-Semitic themes.<sup>1305</sup> Thus, for instance, anti-Zionist left-wing groups have characterized Israel since the late 1960s as a frontier for capitalism, despite the country’s socialist heritage and its minor role in the World Economy compared to many Arab states, most notably the oil-rich Gulf states. Given this escalation of anti-Jewish rhetoric, it would come as no surprise that the radicalization of the New Left soon translated into violence. To a significant degree, this violence would be directed at Jews. Notable is the case of the far-left and anti-Semitic Tupamaros Group of Dieter Kunzelmann. On February 13, 1970, arsonists set a Jewish home for the elderly ablaze, murdering seven people. Kunzelmann’s group was probably responsible for the attack. They had been instructed in the same Fatah military camps in Jordan in summer 1969 discussed above, which attracted so many New Left European activists.<sup>1306</sup> The New Left’s anti-imperialism was indeed inherently anti-Semitic.

### 7.3 The Palestine Committees Network in Western Europe

Since 1967, Arab and Palestinian officials as well as European sympathizers build a pan-European network to organize anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian activities. This network consisted of Palestine friendship societies, GUPS and Fatah representatives as well as the Arab League Offices. The existing GUPS and Fatah networks in Europe were the base of the pro-Palestinian network. In 1969, the ‘German gang’, Abdallah Frangi, Hani Hassan and Hayel Abdel Hamid set upon organizing GUPS chapters in other European countries.<sup>1307</sup> A phase of rapid expansion followed. In September 1970, the British acquired the list of all the GUPS representatives worldwide. In Western Europe, the GUPS had representatives in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the UK, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark. The most representatives were in the FRG

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<sup>1305</sup> Globisch, *Radikaler Antisemitismus*, 306–8.

<sup>1306</sup> Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, chaps. 13–14; Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel*, chaps. 103–108.

<sup>1307</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 147.

(25), reflecting the fact that the FRG was the main base. It was followed by Spain with 8 representatives. The GUPS also possessed chapters in Eastern Europe in Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the USSR, with most of its representatives located in Yugoslavia. Moreover, there were GUPS chapters in Canada, Venezuela, Chile, China and Pakistan.<sup>1308</sup> The GUPS' importance in Fatah's strategy cannot be overestimated. The organization provided access to Europe's young elite, its intellectuals, lawyers and journalists. Most importantly, it forged an alliance with the nascent New Left.<sup>1309</sup> Its domination of student politics and later the New Left's influence on Social Democratic Parties, which were traditionally friendly to Israel, contributed to shifting the political climate in Europe towards the Palestinians.

Since 1969, numerous Palestine Committees were established in Western Europe to coordinate anti-Zionist activities. In the FRG, the Maoist *Sozialistische Palästina-Komitee Heidelberg* (Engl. Socialist Palestine Committee Heidelberg) was established in 1969. It identified with the left-wing Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and edited the magazine *Die Front*. The *Palästina-Komitee* in Bonn, which was established in 1971, took a pro-PLO position. It also edited its own magazine, titled *Die Revolution (Al-Thaura)*. It took a lead in the pro-PLO majority of German PCs, which also included PCs in the German cities of Aachen, Bielefeld, Hamburg, Münster, Kiel and Göttingen. Often, the PC in Heidelberg and the one in Bonn would clash over the right line to take. Repeated endeavors, like at the Palestine Congress in November 1973 in Bonn, to unite the pro-Palestinian solidarity scene in an umbrella group under the auspices of the PLO therefore failed. Only in 1975, the pro-PLO PCs could agree on editing a common press organ, the *Freies Palästina*.<sup>1310</sup> After the massacre of Israeli sportsmen at the Olympic Games in Munich, both the GUPS and the GUPA were banned in Germany on October 3, 1972. The German Federal Ministry of the Interior explained this step as a measure to prevent violent acts in Germany, although no GUPS members were proven to have been involved in the massacre, or were

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<sup>1308</sup> "List of GUPS Representatives" (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, September 14, 1970), FCO 95/961.

<sup>1309</sup> Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 43.

<sup>1310</sup> Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 85–87.

prosecuted. The Federal Ministry of the Interior estimated that at this point between 800 and 1000 persons were part of the GUPS. GUPS publications, such as the bulletin *Resistenza*, were affected by the ban and closed down. Several leaders of the GUPS, including Abdallah al-Frangi and military recruiter Walim Nasir, were expelled. Nasir relocated to the University of Madrid, where he continued his recruiting activities.<sup>1311</sup> Abdallah Frangi would be readmitted to Germany after a few years. In response to the prohibition, the German PCs staged nationwide protests.<sup>1312</sup>

A Palestine solidarity network was also established in Italy and France. In the late 1960s, the Fatah representative in Rome, Wael Zwaiter, formed ties with numerous intellectuals, thereby laying the foundation for the Italian Committee for Solidarity with the Palestinian people (Ital. *Comitato italiana per la solidarietà con il popolo palestinese*), which was set up in March 1969. The Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity provided support for the committee. Numerous solidarity committees were also established in different Italian cities. They held a yearly convention. A group which called itself Arab Students Residing in Italy (Ital. *studenti arabi residenti in Italia*) and was associated with Fatah, appeared on the scene in November 1969, co-hosting with the Committee for Solidarity a public pro-Palestinian meeting in Rome. The Italian chapter of the GUPS was eventually created in this environment at a constitutive congress on May 14-15, 1971 in Perugia. After its establishment, the GUPS quickly assumed an important role in propagandizing the Palestinian cause at universities and in the general population. It also liaised intensively with left-wing organizations on behalf of pro-Palestinian activism.<sup>1313</sup>

In France, the first PC was founded in June 1967, immediately after the war. In 1968, pro-Palestinian activists established the *Association de Solidarité Franco-Arabe* (ASFA). The group included not only members of the Left, but also adherents of De

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<sup>1311</sup> Zerkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine*, 40–42; Matthias Dahlke, *Demokratischer Staat und transnationaler Terrorismus: Drei Wege zur Unnachgiebigkeit in Westeuropa 1972-1975* (Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 92–93.

<sup>1312</sup> Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 83–85.

<sup>1313</sup> Arturo Marzano and Guri Schwarz, *Attentato alla sinagoga. Roma, 9 ottobre 1982. Il conflitto israelo-palestinese e l'Italia* (Roma: Viella, 2013), 57–59.

Gaulle, moderate conservatives like Lucien Bitterlin and Louis Terrenoire, who were instrumental in the ASFA's establishment. Lucien Bitterlin was notable for his proximity to the French state and intelligence service. During the Algerian War, he had been the head of the *Mouvement pour la Communauté* from 1960 until 1961 in Algeria. This was a clandestine group which supported De Gaulle's policies in Algeria and was supported by the external French Intelligence Service, SDECE. Its mission was to infiltrate and combat the OAS, a paramilitary organization fighting against the independence of Algeria. Lucien Bitterlin's involvement reflected the fact that De Gaulle had moved France's foreign policy into a pro-Arab direction before the Six-Day War.<sup>1314</sup> Fatah members Mahmoud Hamchari and Muhammed Abou Mayer moved to Paris in January 1969 to help organize the pro-Palestinian movement. They started publishing the newspaper *Fedayeen* and established Palestine Action Committees (Fr. *comité action Palestine*). In this endeavor, they collaborated with activists from the far-left. Unlike in other European countries, a significant number of French New Left activists were Jewish with the result that several far-left, Jewish anti-Zionist activists also played a role in the Palestine solidarity scene in France. The later scholar of Islam Maxime Rodinson or Benny Levy, Alain Geismar and Léo Levy from the Maoist *Gauche Prolétarienne* belonged to this group. The two latter later joined their European comrades in August 1969 to visit PLO camps in Jordan, where they were accompanied by Mahmoud Hamchari and Abou Mayer. Organized solidarity with Arab Palestinian nationalism by left-wing Jews dated back to the Six-Days War. Anti-Zionist Jews formed the Committee of Anti-Zionist Jews and reached out to their Muslim fellow students. The alliance would enter a crisis in 1972, when Jews faced anti-Semitism from their Muslim colleagues in the pro-Palestine movement and a series of anti-

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<sup>1314</sup> Marc Hecker, "Un Demi-Siècle de Militantisme pro-Palestinien En France: Évolution, Bilan et Perspectives," *Confluences Méditerranée* 86, no. 3 (2013): 197, doi:10.3917/come.086.0197; Jean Monneret and Dominique Venner, *La phase finale de la guerre d'Algérie*, édition revue et corrigée (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2010), 44–46; Jacques Frémeaux, *Le Monde Arabe et La Sécurité de La France Depuis 1958*, Politique d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), 280.

Semitic events occurred.<sup>1315</sup> The discrepancy between its leader Benny Lévy, who condemned the Munich massacre, and its proletarian and Muslim base was a factor in the eventual dissolution of the *Gauche Prolétarienne* in 1973.<sup>1316</sup> Both Fatah representatives in Rome and Paris were killed in 1972, probably by Mossad agents for their alleged involvement in the Munich massacre.

Palestine friendship societies were also formed in smaller European countries like Belgium, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, Ireland and Switzerland.<sup>1317</sup> In Ireland, an Irish-Arab Friendship Society was founded in 1969. Initially, it was headed by Commandant Brennan-Whitmore, a veteran of the 1916 rebellion, but also a fascist activist and anti-Semite. Sean Ryan had him replaced after one year.<sup>1318</sup> There was also the Irish-Arab Solidarity Committee, which was close to Sinn Féin. A chapter of it was active in London.<sup>1319</sup> As discussed above, the Palestinians sought to co-opt the Irish struggle. In Belgium, later PLO representative Naim Khader was instrumental in building a pro-Palestinian network. His biography gives us a description of how Palestinian students in Europe joined Fatah and then went on to build advocacy groups. Originating from an Arab Christian village close to Jenin, Naim Khader studied in Beit Jala and Amman. In September 1966, Naim Khader traveled together with his younger brother Bichara to Belgium to study Law at the Catholic University of Leuven, which already harbored an Arab student community. Naim Khader became the president of the local Arab student association, trying to organize solidarity demonstrations for the Arab states during the Six-Day War, which were subsequently

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<sup>1315</sup> Ethan B. Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North African to France* (Harvard University Press, 2015), 265–88.

<sup>1316</sup> “Mais Qui Est Donc Benny Lévy ?,” *Bibliobs*, accessed December 19, 2016, <http://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/essais/20131003.OBS9679/mais-qui-est-donc-benny-levy.html>.

<sup>1317</sup> See John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September (RLE Israel and Palestine): The Story of the Palestinian Arabs* (Routledge, 2015), 186–88.

<sup>1318</sup> Marie-Violaine Louvet, *Civil Society, Post-Colonialism and Transnational Solidarity: The Irish and the Middle East Conflict* (Springer, 2016), 25–33.

<sup>1319</sup> British Embassy Dublin, “Memo on the Irish-Arab Friendship Society.”

banned by the University. He was also elected as the president of the association of foreign students, editing its *Bulletin d'Information*.<sup>1320</sup> Among the members of the student association were also young Canadians from Quebec, who exposed a particular sympathy towards the Palestinian cause.<sup>1321</sup> In the course of 1968, Khader joined Fatah. On September 30, 1969, he received the full authorization from Fatah for “collecting money to help the families of the resistance and the martyrs who die on the battlefield. Arab and free Palestine shall live!”<sup>1322</sup> The collection of money for the bereaved had served as a codeword since the days of the Arab Revolt 1936-39 for fundraising activities, this time on behalf of the paramilitary struggle of Fatah. Khader had the feeling that the Europeans were suffering a ‘guilt complex’ because of the Holocaust, which was exploited by “the efficiency of the Zionist propaganda.”<sup>1323</sup> It was his mission to change this. Out of different local Palestinian Committees, a national organization, the *Association Belgo-Palestinienne*, was formed on November 23, 1974, one day after the PLO’s recognition by the UN General Assembly. The Association edited the magazine *Palestine* and was headed by Jean Delfosse, the editor of the left-wing journal *Revue Nouvelle*, which had published several of Khader’s articles in the past. The Libyans had been in close contact with Delfosse since the start and paid the whole budget of the new association, amounting to a million BEF in 1974. At this time, the close association with the political Left worried Khader, as it limited the public appeal of the PLO. However, projects to diversify the support base to form a new organization, despite being encouraged by the Arab ambassadors in Belgium, failed.<sup>1324</sup>

There were repeated endeavors to commit the different pro-Palestinian organizations to a common platform. At the first European working meeting of the PCs in Vienna on March 26, 1971, they agreed on a common program. The program rejected any peace

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<sup>1320</sup> Robert Verdussen, *Naïm Khader. Prophète foudroyé du peuple palestinien* (Bruxelles: Le Cri Edition, 2001), 45–52.

<sup>1321</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–62.

<sup>1322</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>1323</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>1324</sup> *Ibid.*, 149–50.

between Israel and the Palestinians because the Israelis were not a nation. Instead, it mandated the “*complete destruction of Israel*” through “*armed popular war*”.<sup>1325</sup> The text also implied that the PCs understood themselves as a propaganda and political lobby group of the PLO.<sup>1326</sup> The PCs were indeed a formidable instrument to advance the PLO agenda in Europe. In 1972, another umbrella group was established. The European Committee for the Coordination of Friendship Associations of the Arab World, CECAAMA (Fr. *Comité Européen de Coordination des Associations d’Amitié avec le Monde Arabe*) was established in 1972 by the French ASFA, The Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) and the Swiss *Groupe d’Etudes sur le Moyen Orient* (GEMO).<sup>1327</sup> The Swiss were informed about the organization by an inside source, who provided them with a detailed view of the inner workings of the committee. The CECAAMA edited the bulletin *Eurabia*. One of the first actions of the CECAAMA was to pen a letter to President Nixon dated May 14, 1973. The letter called for the withdrawal of US support from Israel. It was also published by the Palestinian Liberation Army, an armed wing of the PLO, in its organ *Arab Palestinian Resistance* in July 1973, accompanied by anti-Semitic imagery. Taking up tested anti-Zionist claims, the letter alleged that US support for Israel was against the United States’ own interests and that it was controlled by a small minority of Zionists not loyal to the US state: “*No American lives are at stake. You will be endangering no vital American interests — on the contrary, you will be protecting the real interests of the U.S. in the Middle East. The only disagreeable consequence will be that you will have to face violent protests from Israel and from Zionist pressure groups in the United States who put Israel’s interests above those of their own country. Is this too high a price to pay for peace in the Middle East?*”<sup>1328</sup> As we will see, the CECAAMA was better organized

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<sup>1325</sup> cited in Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 83.

<sup>1326</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1327</sup> “Procès verbal de la réunion du CECAAMA du 24 novembre 1973” March 6, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

<sup>1328</sup> “EURABIA Committee Letter from May 14, 1973,” *Arab Palestinian Resistance*, July 1973, 89–94.



and more influential than the PCs could ever be due to its establishment and moderate outlook.

The CECAAMA organized one to two conferences each year, which were attended by the leading representatives of pro-Arab organizations from Western Europe and of the Arab League. Its aim was to coordinate the campaigns of different pro-Arab organizations both with each other and with the Arab League. After a smaller reunion on May 26, 1973, the committee gathered again for its first major conference on November 24, 1973 in London. Besides its founding member, the conference was also attended by the Irish-Arab Society, the French *Conférence des Chrétiens pour la Palestine*, the Swiss *Aide Suisse aux Réfugiés du Moyen Orient* (ASRMO) and the Swiss-Arab Society, the *Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft*, DAG (Engl. German-Arab Society), the constitutive committee of the *Associazione di Amicizia Italo-Araba* (Engl. Italian-Arab Friendship Association), from Belgium the *Cercle d'amitié Belgo-Arabe* as well as the *Comité Palestine-Belgique* and finally the Netherlands–Arab Institute. The list of attendants includes prominent names like Lelio Basso, a Socialist Italian senator at the time of the conference and a member of the Russel Tribunal. Others were the French Gaullist politician Raymond Offroy and the British Labour MP Christopher Mayhew. Some of the initial participants are still active to this day. Harald Bock for instance, the representative of the German-Arab Society (DAG), still officiates as the group's General Secretary. The Swiss representatives were Hans Ellenberger from the Swiss-Arab Society and Georges Vaucher from the *Aide Suisse aux réfugiés du Moyen Orient*, who had already attended the first meeting in Paris.<sup>1329</sup> Representatives of the Arab League Offices in London, Geneva, Paris and Brussels were also present at these conferences. The importance the Arab League placed in the CECAAMA was further underlined by the presence of Ibrahim Shukralla, the League's Information Director. Another illustrious guest was Amin Gemayel, at the time a Christian Lebanese parliamentarian for the Phalanges Party and later president of Lebanon at the May 1973 reunion.<sup>1330</sup> His presence is somewhat surprising. After all, during the Israeli incursion into Lebanon in 1982, the Israelis were often accused by European pro-

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<sup>1329</sup> "Procès verbal de la réunion du CECAAMA du 24 novembre 1973."

<sup>1330</sup> "Memo on CECAAMA Conference on May 26, 1973, in London" August 29, 1973, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

Palestinian activists of being fascists because they collaborated with the Christian Phalangist militias.

Several decisions were taken at the November 1973 conference which concerned the future workings of the CECAAMA. The body was to be directed by an Executive Bureau, consisting of one representative each from CAABU, ASFA, DAG, ASRMO, the Irish-Arab Society, and the Netherlands–Arab Institute, as well as one representative from Italy and Belgium.<sup>1331</sup> The conference also confirmed the French Lucien Bitterlin of ASFA as the Secretary General of the Committee, and the British John Reddaway, the director of administration of CAABU, as Treasurer until 1975.<sup>1332</sup> The attendants also discussed a number of ideas to advance the Palestinian cause in Europe. Raymond Offroy informed the delegates on the creation of a group of French parliamentarians sympathizing with the Arab cause whose aim was to coordinate the policies of France with those of the Arab states. Together with the British Labour MP Christopher Mayhew, who was equally present at the conference, he planned to expand this group to the European level.<sup>1333</sup> Indeed, such efforts resulted in the creation of the Parliamentary Association for the Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC) not long afterwards, which will be discussed further below.<sup>1334</sup> Another project, proposed by John Reddaway (CAABU), envisioned that the European Economic Community (EEC) would provide foreign aid for the Palestinian Arabs to foster their economic and social development. The plan was forwarded to the Executive Bureau for further discussion. With regards to media relations, it was suggested that a memorandum be

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<sup>1331</sup> “Procès verbal de la réunion du CECAAMA du 24 novembre 1973.”

<sup>1332</sup> Ibid.; CAABU, “Second Annual Report” February 1970, 19, TNA FCO 17/994.

<sup>1333</sup> “Procès verbal de la réunion du CECAAMA du 24 novembre 1973.”

<sup>1334</sup> “Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on November 9-10, 1974, in Paris” December 4, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*; EU-Turn, “Euro-Arab Dialogue | Institut MEDEA,” accessed September 29, 2017, <http://www.medeabe/en/themes/euro-mediterranean-cooperation/euro-arab-dialogue/>.

written for the Arab League and the Arab countries, in order to facilitate the exchange of information between the Arabs and their European supporters.<sup>1335</sup>

The Executive Bureau met for the first time on January 26, 1974 in Paris to discuss the CECAAMA's finances, propaganda and administration. Two weeks later, on February 9, 1974, the Executive Bureau reconvened in Paris to discuss among other things future conferences and the expenses of the Committee. Besides the delegates from five countries, a member from the PLO was present at the meeting.<sup>1336</sup> Other meetings of the Executive Bureau took place in March and on June 8, 1974 in Paris. At the meeting in June, the dispatchment of a delegation to the PLO was discussed. The purpose of the mission was to hear the PLO's opinion on the future work of the CECAAMA. Upon the return of the delegation, documentation was to be prepared on the origins and aims of the Palestinian national movement and this was to be distributed to all journalists accredited at the Geneva Conference on the Middle East. Another agenda item concerned the establishment of contact with the Palestinian representatives in the US in order to coordinate with them on their activities. Furthermore, the CECAAMA planned to hold two talks, one of them in Geneva, on the Palestinian issue.<sup>1337</sup> The talk eventually took place on November 25, 1974 in Geneva under the auspices of Lucien Bitterlin and dealt with the situation in Lebanon and the Golan. During the talk, Israel was accused of the destruction of the Syrian city of Kuneitra and of planning to 'exterminate' the residents of Southern Lebanon in order to annex the area.<sup>1338</sup> Two weeks before, on November 9 and 10, 1974, the Executive Bureau had reconvened in Paris. There, Lucien Bitterlin reported on the parliamentary action in the aftermath of the preparatory conference for the Euro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue, which had taken place two months earlier in Damascus. Furthermore, he

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<sup>1335</sup> "Procès verbal de la réunion du CECAAMA du 24 novembre 1973."

<sup>1336</sup> "Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on January 26, 1974, in Paris" February 21, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

<sup>1337</sup> "Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on March 13, 1974, in Paris" March 13, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*; "Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on June 8, 1974, in Paris" July 2, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

<sup>1338</sup> J.S.M., "Israel Accusé," *Voix Ouvrière*, October 28, 1974.

notified the Bureau, that European volunteers for Palestinian guerrilla forces, which he euphemistically called “*peace commandos*”, would henceforth be refused from entering Lebanon for fear of Israeli reprisals. The members of the Executive Bureau were also tasked to write letters to their respective governments in order to influence them ahead of the debate on Palestine at the UN?, which was scheduled for November 22, 1974.<sup>1339</sup> This debate eventually resulted in the adoption of UN resolutions 3236 and 3237, which declared the “*right to national independence and sovereignty*” of the Palestinian people and granted observer status to the PLO, an immense victory for the Palestinian national movement.<sup>1340</sup>

The reports of the French mole inside the organization also provide an insight into the funding of CECAAMA. In the beginning, the financial means of the Committee were humble. At the first conference in May 1973 it was planned that CAABU would finance the Committee for six months with an amount of £5'000.<sup>1341</sup> As one might expect, the CECAAMA was financed predominantly by Arab sources, but additionally by the French. According to the anonymous source cited in a memo of the Swiss federal police, the CECAAMA's expenses were covered by 60% to 65% by Arab states, 35% by France and 5% by the Arab League.<sup>1342</sup> Part of the money allegedly came from ARAF, the Arab support fund for Arab friendship societies.<sup>1343</sup> In June 1974, it was announced to the Executive Bureau that Algeria would transfer five million dollars to the CECAAMA.<sup>1344</sup> This seems an incredibly high sum, especially given that two years later, the CECAAMA appeared to be broke. At the time of another conference of the

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<sup>1339</sup> “Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on November 9-10, 1974, in Paris.”

<sup>1340</sup> United Nations General Assembly, “3236 (XXIX). Question of Palestine” (1974), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/738/38/IMG/NR073838.pdf>.

<sup>1341</sup> “Note: Réunion des délégués euroéens des Comités de soutien à la résistance palestinienne” December 27, 1973, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

<sup>1342</sup> “Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on January 26, 1974, in Paris.”

<sup>1343</sup> Louvet, *Civil Society, Post-Colonialism and Transnational Solidarity*, 29–30.

<sup>1344</sup> “Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on June 8, 1974, in Paris.”

Executive Committee on March 27, 1976 in Paris, it was noted that the expenses exceeded the income: the CECAAMA had only 170'000 francs left, about 37'000 US dollars at the contemporary exchange rate. A further 900'000 francs from Arab donors were promised to be transferred in the course of the next six months.<sup>1345</sup> Given these regular incomes, it is evident that the CECAAMA's partners considered its work to be highly important.

#### 7.4 Establishment anti-Zionism: The CAABU in Britain

In the UK, the pro-Arab anti-Zionism which harked back to that of the mandate era, had not disappeared after 1948. Edward Spears' anti-Zionist group the Anglo-Arab Association, an umbrella group of British anti-Zionists founded in 1946, continued its existence until 1961, when it then regrouped as the Anglo-Arab Club.<sup>1346</sup> Since the 1950s, the Labour MP Margaret McKay had been the leading advocate of the Arab cause in Britain. In the 1960s, she was the chairwoman of the Anglo-Jordanian Alliance, a group of pro-Arab parliamentarians. Her pro-Arab advocacy met little success, apparently, as in 1967 she stated: *"I have been doing my damndest in the House to try to get an understanding between the two sides. I have tried in the House to form Anglo-Arab associations because the Arabs are so bad at stating the case, if they have one."*<sup>1347</sup> Like in other European countries, this was about to change. After the Six-Day War, both left-wing and mainstream anti-Zionism in the US gained ground.

There were several factors contributing to this turn of the tide. One of them was the attitude of the British Foreign Office. Like the American State Department, the Foreign

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<sup>1345</sup> "Procès verbal de la réunion du CECAAMA du Mars 27 1976 à Paris" April 27, 1976, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

<sup>1346</sup> "Present Council of the Anglo-Arab Association (1961)" 1961, ESP 14.4; Edward A. Rizk and Arab Information Centre, "Letter to Edward Spears," June 6, 1962, ESP 14.4; for the activities of the Anglo-Arab Association before 1948, see Miller, *Divided against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948*.

<sup>1347</sup> "MIDDLE EAST (Hansard, 31 May 1967)," accessed June 21, 2017, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1967/may/31/middle-east>.

Office had traditionally tended towards an antagonistic position regarding Zionism. After the Six-Day War, Foreign Secretary George Brown complained “*that the Arab Case was hardly ever heard in this country*” and that he was seeking to change this.<sup>1348</sup> This was hardly an accurate sentiment, but it was shared by many in Europe. They felt that European public opinion had tilted too much towards the Israelis during the recent war and they set out to change this. Moreover, the overwhelming Israeli victory for the moment overshadowed all internecine rifts such as that between the ‘revolutionary’, Nasserist and the conservative countries. On July 19, 1967, Labour MP Colin Jackson informed the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office that he and Conservative MP Ian Gilmour were to set up a new organization with the goal of promoting further Arab-British understanding, and invited the Minister of State to join its founding meeting on July 27, 1967. A great number of MPs, Arabists, scholars and other distinguished personalities had also been invited to attend the meeting.<sup>1349</sup> The membership eventually included politicians such as Labour MPs Margaret McKay and Christopher Mayhew, the Arabists Anthony Nutting and John Glubb, the Orientalist scholars Albert Hourani, Kathleen Kenyon, Arnold Toynbee, John Allegro and many others. The founding MPs Colin Jackson and Ian Gilmour served as chairmen, while Elizabeth Collard served as joint honorary secretary. CAABU’s declared aims and objects expressed special sympathy for the Palestinian Arabs, and affirmed that Britain could not be indifferent to their situation in light of their former administration of the Palestine mandate.<sup>1350</sup>

Colin Jackson was a member of the Anglo-UAR parliamentary group, and had met Nasser recently in January 1967 to discuss the improvement of bilateral relations, which was also a paramount goal for the FO.<sup>1351</sup> Such efforts had been hampered by the war. In the beginning, the Foreign Office’s NENAD therefore welcomed the establishment of the new pro-Arab body “*in the hope that it would lead to an*

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<sup>1348</sup> “The Pro-Arab Lobby,” *Jewish Chronicle*, May 24, 1968.

<sup>1349</sup> Colin Jackson, “Letter to Eastern Department,” July 19, 1967, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1350</sup> CAABU, “The Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding - Aims and Objects” 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1351</sup> Stewart Jones, *British Policy in the Middle East 1966-74* (Lulu.com, 2009), 78.

*improvement in our relations with the Arab world as a whole.*"<sup>1352</sup> It was also expecting that the presence of respected personalities directing the organization would exert a "(...) *moderating influence on those with extremist ideas on the Arab Cause.*"<sup>1353</sup> The FO endorsed a proposal by CAABU to establish informal links, underlining the proximity between the FO and CAABU. Henceforth, CAABU activists and FO officials would regularly meet up.<sup>1354</sup> Apparently, the rapprochement between the CAABU and the FO was motivated by concern about the pro-Israeli mood which reigned in the country – as in much of Western Europe – after the Six-Day War. The FO thus noted that CAABU might "(...) *serve redress some of the balance now in favour of the number of Anglo-Jewish, Zionists and Israeli societies in this country.*"<sup>1355</sup> The opportunity to report on positive views via the Arab world was immediately seized on by British diplomats in the Arab world. Thus, the British representative in Sudan was looking for more information for the FO to publicize among the locals in order to foster Anglo-Arab friendship and improve Britain's reputation, which was perceived as "*rather cold-hearted and unsympathetic.*"<sup>1356</sup> The establishment of CAABU was not only welcomed by the Arabists at the FO, but also by the Arab League Office in London.<sup>1357</sup>

However, it soon became clear that CAABU would not have its message controlled by the FO. On November 2, 1967, CAABU planned to hold a counter event to a Balfour Declaration memorial event in London attended by the Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban, considering inviting the famous Egyptian journalist Mohamed Heikal, who was close to Nasser, to the event. CAABU member Elizabeth Collard chose to discuss the

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<sup>1352</sup> J.C. Moberly, "Letter to Mr. Arbuthott on CAABU," July 27, 1967, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1354</sup> Mr. Roberts, "To Mrs. E. Collard," October 16, 1967, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1355</sup> Moberly, "Letter to Mr. Arbuthott on CAABU."

<sup>1356</sup> British Interests Section of the Italian Embassy, Khartoum, "To Mrs. Ann Elwell, FO/CO," January 20, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1357</sup> "Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding," *The Arab* 1, no. 8 (September 1967): 2.

event with Foreign Secretary George Brown in advance in an effort to get his acquiescence. She also expressed support for continuing the close links with the FO and offered her help. Extreme Arab nationalists like John Glubb, she reported on a positive note, were losing influence within CAABU.<sup>1358</sup> Still, the Foreign Secretary George Brown did not approve of the event but did not dare confront Elizabeth Collard directly during their conversation, expecting that she would relay it to the Arabs with “discouraging effect”. Instead, he preferred to use other back-channels to relay his opinion.<sup>1359</sup> CAABU continued to seek attendance by British officials at their events, but these refrained from coming due to CAABU’s pro-Arab point of view.<sup>1360</sup>

In February 1968, CAABU held its first public conference. The speakers excoriated Israel’s treatment of the Palestine Arab refugees and the allegedly nefarious influence of the Zionist influence in the UK and in the US, while *the “Arabs’ view had been neglected”*. Through its activities, CAABU had “started to fill a gap,” the English-language Egyptian newspaper *Egyptian Gazette* reported. Still the newspaper warned that CAABU had powerful enemies, as *“In Britain, scarcely less than in the US, Zionism commands the power of financial control over large sectors of the economy.”*<sup>1361</sup> Despite CAABU’s clear pro-Arab advocacy, there were also voices from the Arab press which felt that CAABU was not going far enough. A Lebanese newspaper even criticized Colin Jackson and Elizabeth Collard of being sympathizers of Israel, because Collard had allegedly expressed a positive impression of Israel during a trip to the country. Consequently, the newspaper called on Arab governments to cut their funding for CAABU.<sup>1362</sup> In May 1968, Collard was planning a trip to the Middle East. She also

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<sup>1358</sup> Mr. Morphet, “Record of Conversation between the Foreign Secretary and Mrs. Elizabeth Collard,” October 5, 1967, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1359</sup> Mr. Morphet, “Memo on Conversation with Mrs. Collard,” October 5, 1967, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1360</sup> A.R. Moore, “To Mr. Brenchley,” April 26, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1361</sup> “Welcome Views,” *Egyptian Gazette*, February 18, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1362</sup> J.L.Y. Sanders, “To J.C. Moberly, Eastern Department,” May 2, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39; J.L.Y. Sanders, “Translation of an Article in ‘Lissan Ul-Hal’” May 2, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.



hoped to visit Jerusalem, but without getting in touch with Israeli officials, as she told the FO. She feared that such a contact might put her reputation as a pro-Arab activist at risk. She also solicited help from the British consulate in Jerusalem to travel from Jordan to Israel. Yet the consul declined to help, saying that her status travelling as a journalist did not justify the requested provision of services.<sup>1363</sup> Upon Collard's return to Jordan, she blamed the Israelis for having expelled Arabs from the areas of Latrun and Jabel Mukaber, creating space for Israeli settlements.<sup>1364</sup> The British consul found no truth in these statements, writing to the Eastern Department: "*There is no evidence at all that the Israelis are settling their people in the Latroun or that they have Arabs from the Jebel Mukabbir.*"<sup>1365</sup>

CAABU was not totally independent from the wave of New Left anti-Zionism. The young activist Grania Birkett joined the CAABU office staff in July 1969.<sup>1366</sup> Birkett also wrote for the magazine *Free Palestine*, which had been established by Fatah supporters in 1968.<sup>1367</sup> In the summer of 1969, she travelled to the Middle East, authoring a report on the situation in the West Bank.<sup>1368</sup> Michael Adams, a former *Guardian* journalist, worked as CAABU's director of information and John Reddaway as the director of administration.<sup>1369</sup> According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, CAABU had paid for a trip of *Guardian* journalist Michael Adams to the Middle East before he had

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<sup>1363</sup> Foreign Office, "Telegram No. 1127 to Embassy in Beirut," May 24, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39; Foreign Office, "Telegram No. 326 to Consulate in Jerusalem," May 29, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1364</sup> Foreign Office, "Statement of the Secretary of CAABU" June 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1365</sup> E.E. Key and British Consulate-General Jerusalem, "To M.F. Daly," June 25, 1968, TNA FCO 17/39.

<sup>1366</sup> CAABU, "Second Annual Report," 7.

<sup>1367</sup> Rich, *The Left's Jewish Problem*, 77.

<sup>1368</sup> CAABU, "Second Annual Report," 9–13.

<sup>1369</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

become its Director of Information, i.e. the person responsible for public diplomacy.<sup>1370</sup> When the CAABU General Meeting took place in November 1969, its director Michael Adams felt that the public mood was swinging towards the Arabs because articles critical of Israel began to appear in the mainstream press like the *Times*. This changing press coverage could be used “as a springboard to launch us in making some real headway in the coming year.”<sup>1371</sup> Adams advised that they continue their public diplomacy work like they had done for the last two years successfully. Indeed, CAABU had displayed a diverse array of activities, which ranged from letters to newspaper editors to the staging of regular events. Adams also observed the activities of Jewish anti-Zionists with satisfaction, “because it emphasizes the fundamental distinction between the Jew and the Zionist, and that is vitally important.”<sup>1372</sup>

CAABU had not been envisioned as a mass organization. Despite that, it grew during the first two years of its existence. In 1969, it had about 860 members, 200 more than one year before. However, it estimated that this bore no relation to “the amount of public sympathy we now command”.<sup>1373</sup> It also succeeded in making no inroads. In 1969, Christopher Mayhew established the Labour Middle East Committee to organize the pro-Arab voices in the party. More than twenty MPs joined the new body, the offices of which neighbored that of CAABU’s. CAABU also planned to build new regional branches and to establish a coordination committee with the other established pro-Arab body in the UK, the Anglo-Arab Association.<sup>1374</sup> The rapid and successful management of CAABU was also due to its competent management. Christopher Mayhew had had experience with propaganda work before. In 1948, as a parliament undersecretary, he had been instrumental in setting up the Foreign Office’s Information Research Department, which was tasked with countering Soviet propaganda.<sup>1375</sup>

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<sup>1370</sup> “The Pro-Arab Lobby.”

<sup>1371</sup> CAABU, “Second Annual Report,” 3.

<sup>1372</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>1373</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>1374</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–6.

<sup>1375</sup> Nigel Clive, “Ups and down of a Maverick,” *Spectator*, April 5, 1997.

Margaret McKay also rode the wave of rising pro-Arab sympathy in the country – and Arab readiness to invest in it. In February 1969, Margaret McKay opened an Arab Centre in London. She received funds for this endeavor from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi.<sup>1376</sup> In October 1969, she acquired a building for £50'000 in London with the money donated by the Sheikh. In a public statement, she said provocatively that the building would serve as a *“forward station for the Guerillas”*.<sup>1377</sup> After the statement led to criticism in the press, she declared that she was against the activity of the Fedayeen and that they would not be allowed into the building.<sup>1378</sup>

A new Conservative government under Prime Minister Edward Heath came to power on June 19, 1970. Sir Alec Douglas-Home served as Foreign Secretary. The new government continued the Labour policy of seeking a rapprochement with the Arabs. On October 31, 1970, Sir Alec Douglas-Home spoke to the Conservative Party in Harrogate. The speech became a watershed moment in British Middle East policy. Douglas-Home called for a settlement on the basis of the truce lines of 1949. The Israelis felt that this was in contravention of UNSCR 242.<sup>1379</sup> Moreover, he expressed support for Palestinian self-determination: *“The need for a just settlement of the refugee problem is pressing, although it is unrealistic to suppose that a settlement will be reached before the other issues of which I have spoken are resolved. And we must not ignore the political aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs and their desire to be given a means of self-expression. We cannot support any political programme which would involve the disappearance of the state of Israel; this is what the Palestinian resistance [sic] organisations at present demand.”*

CAABU sought to push the government into an even more pro-Arab direction. On July 14, 1970, Minister of State John Godber of the FCO met with Conservative MP and

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<sup>1376</sup> “Arab Centre,” *AJR Information* 24, no. 2 (February 1969).

<sup>1377</sup> P. G. D., “Polemiche Su Un Centro Di Propaganda a Londra,” *Oriente Moderno* 49, no. 9/10 (1969): 500.

<sup>1378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1379</sup> Jones, *British Policy in the Middle East 1966-74*, 127–28.

CAABU member Dennis Walters. Out of this conversation seems to have grown the idea to draft a statement for the FCO, which amounted to a 'mea culpa' for British Middle East policy since the Balfour declaration. The statement would point out that the British mandate had sought to create a state within which both Arabs and Jews could live peacefully together. According to this declaration, it had never been Britain's intention *"that the Arab population of Palestine should be deprived of their homes and native land and forced to become either exiles or the unwilling subjects of a Jewish state."*<sup>1380</sup> Britain would support a redress for the loss of the Palestinians, which was the central issue of the Middle East conflict.<sup>1381</sup> Douglas-Home rejected the idea of putting out such a statement, but endorsed its substance to some degree. He responded that the British government was recognizant of the fate of the Palestinian refugees and had addressed them in his Harrogate speech. However, such an openly pro-Arab statement was liable to raise the hopes of the Palestinians beyond those expected in a future settlement. Douglas-Home also disagreed that all Palestinians had been expelled from Palestine, as many had found refuge in the West Bank, Gaza or had stayed in Israel. However, he agreed with Walters that *"the Palestinians lie at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East."*<sup>1382</sup> This realization would guide the policy of the Conservative government in Britain.

## 7.5 Fatah, the Swiss Palestine Committees and International Terrorism

As discussed above, the Arab League and Fatah worked together in Switzerland to promote the Palestinian cause during the 1969 trial against three PFLP terrorists. Fatah representative Fuad coordinated this campaign from Geneva. This network remained active after 1969, with Fuad Shamali still taking a central role in it. Shamali not only liaised with Swiss anti-Zionists, but also seems to have been responsible for Fatah operations in all of Europe, routinely meeting with Fatah-leader Arafat while

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<sup>1380</sup> Dennis Walters and Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, "Letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home," November 1971, TNA FCO 17/1394.

<sup>1381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1382</sup> Alec Douglas-Home, "Letter to Dennis Walters," December 15, 1971, TNA FCO 17/1394.

enjoying great autonomy in his action. According to Genoud's biographer Pierre Péan, he was the center of a militant network which included other former members of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, SSNP. This group consisted among others of Ali Hassan Salameh, Mahmoud Hamchari, and Daoud Barakat. Shamali also introduced the Nazi and Liberation Nationalist, François Genoud, to this circle. According to the latter, this group also constituted the core of Black September.<sup>1383</sup> The Fatah presence in Switzerland was strengthened in April 1969 with the arrival of Abdel-Majid Zeinat, who was officially temporarily studying at the University of Geneva. In fact, she also worked for Fatah and assisted Shamali from that point onwards.<sup>1384</sup> Zeinat had already been registered as a member of the Egyptian embassy in 1960.<sup>1385</sup> It is uncertain whether she left the country in the meantime.

As Shamali travels Europe extensively, one cannot fail to notice that his travel destinations mysteriously also happen to become the targets of terrorism. In a phone call with Zeinat on August 29, Shamali speaks cryptically of the 'Luxemburg and Belgium question', asking her when she could make it to Belgium. He announces that he will give her further information on the subject at a later time. On September 2, the Arab League secretary Simone Koueter asks Shamali what she should do with two packages which had arrived from Beirut. Koueter is obviously ignorant of their content. Shamali tells her to deliver the packages to his home before 13:00. At 14:05 on the same day, he takes a Swissair flight from Geneva airport to Brussels, where he stays until September 5, 1969.<sup>1386</sup> Three days later, September 8, 1969, the El-Al offices in Brussels as well as the Israeli embassies in The Haag and Bonn are shattered by

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<sup>1383</sup> ebd., S. 339

<sup>1384</sup> CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*, Contrôle téléphonique de El-Shamali, 17.07.1969-31.10.1969, 26 November 1969

<sup>1385</sup> CH-Bar#E2001E#1976/17#4390\*, Zeinab El Biali - Members of the Embassy of the United Arab Republic, 23 Dezember 1960

<sup>1386</sup> CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*, Contrôle téléphonique de El-Shamali, 17.07.1969-31.10.1969, 26 November 1969

explosions.<sup>1387</sup> The events cited are indicative that Shamali was involved in the attack. Despite the PLO's terrorist activities against Switzerland, the country seems to have served as a safe haven for the PLO during this period. Beside the presence of semi-official Fatah members, it also witnessed regular visits by its senior staff. On March 25, 1970 for instance, Shamali announced to the Arab League Office in Geneva the arrival of Mohammed Said Kamal on March 29.<sup>1388</sup> M. Said Kamal was then unknown to the Swiss police. However, he was a senior PLO leader who had worked since 1970 as the Assistant to the Chief of Political Affairs in the PLO.<sup>1389</sup> Zeinat took care of Kamal during his stay in Switzerland where he visited the Syrian embassy and four Palestinians in Zurich, Berne and Basel.<sup>1390</sup> Shamali's suspicious activities eventually occasioned an entry ban into Switzerland in 1970. In spite of this, he continued to visit Switzerland regularly on the grounds of medical treatment until his death of cancer on September 5, 1972. After the brutal murder of eleven Israeli athletes and one German police officer by a Black September commando during the Olympics in Munich Germany on September 5 and 6 1972, Shamali's involvement in international terrorism came to the attention of the public. In the aftermath of the massacre, the Lebanese newspaper *Al Moharrer* (Engl. the Liberator) published a eulogy on him, terming him

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<sup>1387</sup> CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*136\*, Letter of the Chief of Police of Canton Geneva on preventive measures due to tensions in the Middle East and attacks perpetrated by Palestinian terrorists in Europe, 19 September 1969

<sup>1388</sup> CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*, Contrôle téléphonique de la Délégation Permanente de la Ligue des Etats arabes, avenue Krieg 7, 12. 1. 1970 - 26. 7. 1970, 31 Juli 1970

<sup>1389</sup> Jean Krasno: Interview with Said Kamal United Nations Oral History 1998, <http://www.unmultimedia.org/oralhistory/2013/02/kamal-said/> vom 19.06.2013

<sup>1390</sup> CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*, Contrôle téléphonique de la Délégation Permanente de la Ligue des Etats arabes, avenue Krieg 7, 12. 1. 1970 - 26. 7. 1970, 31 Juli 1970

the “*hero of Munich*”.<sup>1391</sup> However, no public investigation ever revealed whether he really was the mastermind behind Black September.

Daoud Amin Barakat, a young Fatah operative who was born in Jerusalem in 1942, arrived in Switzerland in 1970. Officially, he worked as the Palestinian delegate of the Red Crescent.<sup>1392</sup> However, unofficially, he took over the duties of Shamali. Not too much is publicly known of Barakat’s background. The Swiss believed Barakat to have been living in Germany since 1965, where he had allegedly worked for Fatah. However, if this was the case, he did not fulfill a very prominent role, as he is not mentioned in Frangi’s autobiography or in the relevant literature on the period. In Switzerland, Barakat served in several functions. First, as an unofficial PLO representative, receiving a monthly wage of \$250 from the Arab League, but also as a member of the Arab League Office which was attached to the Yemeni delegation at the UN. Barakat’s frequent travels to other European countries and to the Middle East indicated that he occupied a leading role in the European network of the PLO. He often visited Paris, Rome and Germany to meet with his contacts and with sympathizers of the Palestinian cause.<sup>1393</sup> Barakat would soon enter into negotiations with the Swiss authorities on the opening of a PLO office in Geneva, as will be discussed below in more detail.

Like his Fatah colleague Shamali, Daoud Barakat maintained close contact with the Swiss pro-Palestinian solidarity scene. In the early 1970s, Palestine Committees (PC) were established in Geneva, Lausanne, Zurich and Basel, succeeding the numerous pro-Palestinian friendship groups which had been formed in the period from 1967-69. The two major PCs in Switzerland were the one in Zurich and the one in Geneva. I will concentrate on the former to tell the story of the PCs. The Palestine Committee in

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<sup>1391</sup> CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1214\*, Contrôle téléphonique de la Délégation Permanente de la Ligue des Etats arabes, avenue Krieg 7, 01.05.1969 - 30.06.1969, 21 Juni 1969, vom 09.06.1969: »L'Organisation de libération de Palestine déclare adhérer aux Conventions de Genève«

<sup>1392</sup> “Gespräche mit Arabern in Genf,” *NZZ*, September 25, 1970.

<sup>1393</sup> Attorney General, “Der palästinensische Terror” June 6, 1973, 3–4, CHBAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#261\*.

Zurich was established in 1972 as an umbrella group for pro-Palestinian left-wing groups active in the city and dominated by the communist party PDA (Ger. *Partei der Arbeit*). In the course of the first year of its existence, the PDA however progressively retreated from the PC. Instead, young New Left activists took over. This group included the couple Adriana Trezzini from the canton of Ticino and Sergio Mantovani from Grisons, who worked as journalists at the national television station. Other leading members were Gian Battista Bacchetta, Lucien Leites, Daniel Vischer, Thomas Heilmann and René Horlacher. The publishing house *Eco Libro Verlag* of Giorgio Bellini served as the postal address of the PC Zurich. These were the key persons of the committee. All of the members belonged to the Zurich scene of the New Left and most of them studied at the University of Zurich. The committee was in close contact with Daoud Barakat and the Geneva committee leaders, Antoine Guinand and his wife. But apart from the functionaries of the PLO and the Arab League, there was no Arab element in the group. The few local Arabs in Zurich seem not to have shown any interest in its work.<sup>1394</sup>

The PC Zurich showed little activity until the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. Energized by the war, the PC Zurich planned to raise awareness by the screening of movies on the Palestine issue in Switzerland. Barakat, who regularly attended the meetings of the PC Zurich, also in November and December 1973, helped acquire these movies and covered a part of the expenses for showing them.<sup>1395</sup> The movies, which were shown in the following years in Switzerland, were part of what has been called “*anti-Zionist cinema*.” While the first such movies were realized by Jordanian Fatah members, French and Swiss directors close to the New Left soon took over, including such eminent figures as the iconic filmmaker Jean Luc Godard, who harbored strong anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic convictions. The production of these movies was not only ideologically inspired by Fatah, but also enjoyed the guerrilla movement’s

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<sup>1394</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich: Gegenwärtige Situation”

December 6, 1973, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229; “Telefongespräch Zwischen René Horlacher Und Gianni Bacchetta” July 19, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1395</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich: Gegenwärtige Situation.”



direct logistical and financial support. The first and most popular movie realized in this fashion was '*Palestine vaincra*' by Jean Pierre Olivier de Sardan.<sup>1396</sup> It was also repeatedly screened in Switzerland at the events of the Palestine committees.<sup>1397</sup> With the Middle East again at the center of the political debate, far-left organizations also showed a greater interest in becoming active within the framework of the PC Zurich. The *Revolutionäre Aufbau Zürich*, the *Progressive Organisationen Zürich* (POCH) and the *Lotta di Classe* (Engl. Class struggle) all sent their representatives to the meetings of the PC Zurich. The communist PDA (Ger. *Partei der Arbeit*, Engl. Party of Labour) withdrew its representatives from the party after losing control of the PC Zurich.<sup>1398</sup> POCH was the most influential among these organizations. In the tradition of the German New Left, the POCH discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict was extremely anti-Zionist and in fact often anti-Semitic. Thus, even conspiracy theories claiming that Palestinian terrorism in Europe was organized by the "*Zionists*", were reprinted in its official organ *PO-CH*.<sup>1399</sup>

At their national meeting in September 1974 in Berne, the Palestine Committees established several ideological guidelines (Ger. *Palästina-Plattform des Komitees*), to which the POCH had to subscribe in order to qualify for collaboration. The POCH agreed. The document containing these guidelines was extremely violent and nationalistic. It was heavily influenced by conspirational thought and ignored all shades in the conflict. There was a clear dichotomy: On the one side, there was the oppressed nation of the Palestinian; on the other side, Zionist and imperialist oppressors that

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<sup>1396</sup> Antoine de Baecque, *Godard* (Grasset, 2010); Paul Douglas Grant, *Cinéma Militant: Political Filmmaking and May 1968* (Columbia University Press, 2016), 17; Benjamin Ivry, "Are They Giving an Oscar to an Anti-Semite?," *The Forward*, October 8, 2010, <http://forward.com/culture/132013/are-they-giving-an-oscar-to-an-anti-semite/>.

<sup>1397</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, "Palästina-Komitee Zürich" June 10, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1398</sup> "Palästina-Komitee Zürich" December 11, 1973, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1399</sup> Späti, *Die schweizerische Linke und Israel*, 89.

colluded *“in order to try denying the fact of a Palestinian nation.”* The document declared: *“We expose the direct link, which exists between the global Imperialism and the Zionist occupation. (...) We confront the propaganda of the Zionists and their allies, of which the Swiss bourgeoisie, the aim of which is to slander the struggles of the Arab and in particular the Palestinian people. (...) We expose the role of Switzerland in the Middle East, which very clearly stands by the side of the imperialist powers and against the oppressed people.”*<sup>1400</sup> This is not the place to evaluate the facticity of these claims in their entirety. Still, it is worth pointing out that at this moment, Israel was still governed by the left-wing Labor party and much of its economy nationalized. Support for Israel in the West never did rest on economic arguments, but on moral ones. On the other hand, the economic interests of Western states, including Switzerland, in the Arab world were substantial. Those who denied this had just been proven wrong by the recent OPEC boycott of countries perceived to be favoring Israel. In fact, those who did advocate Arab and later Palestinian interests on the government level had always done so on the basis of economic arguments. Claims made in the document seemed to be more inspired by anti-Semitic images of Jewish wealth and power, arguments which had fascinated, as described above, Arab propagandists in the West since the start, rather than by an honest analysis of the conflict in 1974. Unfortunately, this simplistic document is symptomatic for the discourse in the Swiss pro-Palestinian and far-left scene in the 1970s with regard to the topic. The level of discourse was surprisingly low, particularly in light of the fact that many of the PC's activists had academic backgrounds. There was little interest in analyzing the conflict in depth, even from a pro-Palestinian perspective. The discourse relied heavily on the repetition of stereotypes and slogans. The lack of depth was covered up by the excessive use of catchwords like Zionism or Imperialism, which were usually filler-words for Jewish, Israeli, US or Western. There is no detectable effort to engage in independent or original thought. One gets the impression that the Swiss activists were merely interested in working as propagandists for the PLO. This intense activism came at the expense of intellectual depth.

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<sup>1400</sup> Geschäftsleitung der Palästina Komitees and POCH, “Palästina-Plattform Der Komitees” September 21, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

The PC Zurich and the POCH organized a four-day Palestine information week on February 4-7 at the University of Zurich and the ETH. During this time, POCH member Daniel Vischer, later a prominent pro-Palestinian activist, was mentioned for the first time in the police reports, as he requested permission for Sami Mussalim, a Palestinian student from Bonn and a member of the local Palestine Committee, to speak at the event. The events, which were mostly attended by far-left activists, included discussions and the showing of five pro-Palestinian movies which had partly been acquired by Barakat. In his speech, Sami Mussalim called for the destruction of Israel by the PLO and its replacement by a state *“without religious and state discrimination.”* Only Jews of Palestinian origin would be allowed to remain in the state.<sup>1401</sup> After the successful organization of the event, the PC Zurich wrote a draft for a brochure “against the *“Zionist propaganda lies”*, summarizing its views about Israel and spreading knowledge on the PLO and its military struggle, which was set to be published. According to the draft, the brochure would characterize Zionism as a racist and imperialist movement of the *“Jewish bourgeoisie”*, which had gained control of Palestine through terrorism and collaboration with feudal exploiters. According to the draft, French, British and US Imperialism were the midwives of Zionism and an independent existence of Israel without imperialist support was not feasible. The authors seem to have been unaware that the foreign policy goals of these countries in the Middle East had often been at odds with each other, also regarding Zionism and Israel.<sup>1402</sup>

During 1974 until 1976, the PC Zurich organized regular events relating to the issue of Palestine: film screenings, photo presentations, and discussions. Allegedly Palestinian handwork, propaganda posters or Fatah memorabilia were usually sold at these

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<sup>1401</sup> Bundespolizei, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich” February 1, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229; Bundespolizei, “Betrifft: Redebewilligungsgesuch” February 5, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229; Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Durchführung Der Palästina-Woche” March 11, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1402</sup> Palästina Komitee Zürich, “Palästina Broschüre” 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

events. Still, the expenses for these events were usually covered by the Arab League. The PC Zurich therefore worked to some extent as a contractor of the Arab League and the PLO. Besides Barakat, Adan El-Amad, an employee of the Arab League Office in Geneva, liaised with the PC Zurich.<sup>1403</sup> Despite this support, the PC Zurich found itself in financial trouble after a four-day exposition in June 1974 and the Arab League agreed to pay its debts.<sup>1404</sup> Unlike the PC in Zurich, which was dominated by the New Left, there was a strong intersectional element within the Geneva PC. First there were the left-wing activists like Antoine Guinand. The bourgeois anti-Zionist Georges Vaucher also continued to be active within its ranks. Then there were the Arab representatives, including Daoud Barakat and his collaborators as well as officials from the Arab League. An event which was organized by Antoine Guinand on behalf of the committee in January 1974, which hosted the Lebanese lawyer M. G. Majdalani, was also attended by Soviet delegates. The Swiss authorities were more worried about the co-optation of the Palestine cause through the extreme Left than about the activities themselves. The inspector responsible for the surveillance of the Geneva group commented: *“Although we believe that certain aspirations of the Palestinian people are without doubt legitimate, we need to remind ourselves that the ‘Palestine Committee’ is also a committee of political liaison and Leftism whatever the costs.”*<sup>1405</sup> Throughout 1974, the committee was extremely active, organizing regular conferences and demonstrations. The committee also started a campaign to raise awareness for the fate of the Palestinian prisoners in Israel. In November 1974, the Palestine committees in Geneva and Lausanne organized events as part of the campaign. Souheil Natour, a

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<sup>1403</sup> Stadtpolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich - Durchführung Einer Fotoausstellung Etc.” May 28, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229; “Telefongespräch Zwischen Herr Amad, Büro Der Arabischen Liga, Und Sergio Mantovani” June 8, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1404</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich” June 15, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1405</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, “Rapport sur la conférence de Genève” February 11, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1232\*; “Le objectifs palestiniens et la conférence de Genève,” *La Suisse*, January 25, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1232\*.

member of the PLO's research center in Beirut, was invited as a speaker. However, at the end of the month, only 600 signatures for a petition were collected during the campaign.<sup>1406</sup>

PC Zurich members also used their private networks to raise awareness. Thus, through his work for Swiss television, Sergio Mantovani tried to bring the view-points of the PLO to the attention of the Swiss public. Thus, in 1974 he repeatedly arranged for Daoud Barakat to be interviewed in the *Tagesschau*, the main Swiss news show. Daoud Barakat seems to have been inexperienced in dealing with the media and several times declined interview requests, for which he was reprimanded by Mantovani during a phone call in May.<sup>1407</sup> This was not the last time PC Zurich members would criticize Barakat. The PC Zurich was internationally connected with the PLO network and most of its leading activists had travelled to Lebanon, where the headquarters of the PLO was. Its members would attend international conferences for sympathizers of the PLO. In July 1974, Daoud Barakat asked Mantovani whether his girlfriend Adriana Trezzini would be able to attend a congress for women in Beirut taking place in August 1974. She could not, because both were set to take their holidays. However, he suggested that female members from other progressive organizations in Switzerland could attend it.<sup>1408</sup> Whether there was a Swiss delegation is unknown. In October moreover, Sergio Mantovani participated in an international meeting of pro-Palestinian organizations in London. Besides him, two other activists from Switzerland, Georges Vaucher and Ahmed Mella from the PC Geneva, participated in the conference.<sup>1409</sup>

For November 1974, the different Palestine Committees in Switzerland planned a solidarity week with Palestinians who had recently been imprisoned by Israel, with

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<sup>1406</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, "Contrôle téléphonique" December 17, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1232\*.

<sup>1407</sup> "Telefongespräch Zwischen Daoud Barakat Und Sergio Mantovani" May 30, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1408</sup> "Telefongespräch Zwischen Daoud Barakat Und Sergio Mantovani" July 10, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1409</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, "Contrôle téléphonique."

events taking place in several Swiss cities. The campaign was coordinated and funded by Daoud Barakat on behalf of the PLO, with Christina Guinand collecting the bills.<sup>1410</sup> In its invitation flyer, the policies of Israel vis-à-vis the Arabs and in the areas conquered by Israel in 1967 was explicitly compared to that of the “*German occupation troops in the Second World War*” and to “*the policy, which South-Africa is conducting*.”<sup>1411</sup> From the start, there seem to have been problems of coordinating the work of the different Palestine committees in preparation for the event. Only four of forty invitees attended a planning meeting.<sup>1412</sup> The event in Zurich was advertised in a street campaign where information material on the situation of the Palestinian prisoners in Israel was distributed. During one of those distributions a brawl broke out between PC Zurich members and supporters of Israel.<sup>1413</sup> The information evening, which took place on November 22 in Zurich, was further marred by several occurrences. On short notice, Barakat cancelled his speech at the event. He was replaced by the little-known Swiss far-left activist Gertrud Germann, who called for the conquest and destruction of Israel during her speech. Moreover, during a discussion, the PC Zurich activists were challenged by several pro-Israeli attendants. According to a police report, they made the impression of being well informed, while the PC Zurich activists seemed to be overwhelmed. Fewer people attended the solidarity week than the PC Zurich had been expecting.<sup>1414</sup> The PC Zurich activists blamed Barakat for the disappointing results. A PC Zurich activist complained to Sergio Mantovani that “*these people*” – the Arabs – “*are not at all a help to the cause. But doesn’t Barakat have nothing else to do? His principal task is supposed to be to help to us, to mount things*

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<sup>1410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1411</sup> Palästinakomitee Zürich, *Freiheit Für Die Palästinensischen Gefangenen!*, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1412</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, “Contrôle téléphonique.”

<sup>1413</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich - Solidaritswoche” December 2, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1414</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich - Informationsabend Vom 22.11.74 Im Volkshaus Zürich” November 27, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

*like this.*" Mantovani agreed with the activist.<sup>1415</sup> His dissatisfaction with Barakat may have pushed Mantovani to take the side of his opponents in the next conflict.

There was a rift within the PC Geneva in late 1974, which led to its split. One faction was under the leadership of the Algerian Ahmed Mellah and the Sudanese Alain Bittar, renaming itself the *Comité Suisse Romande*. The other faction continued to be dominated by Swiss activists led by the Guinands, with Barakat siding with the latter. At this time, the PCs were involved in the planning stage for the next campaign in March 1975, which was set to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the start of the armed struggle of the PLO. The conflict also had repercussions in the PC Zurich which supported a proposal to exclude Mellah's group from working within the national committee on the next campaign. Sergio Mantovani was among the minority who opposed the step.<sup>1416</sup> Sami Mussalam, a researcher at the PLO's Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut, was invited to speak at an event in Zurich on March 1, 1975.<sup>1417</sup> The flyer advertising the event expressed unequivocal support for the military fight. It emphasized that the recent decision of the UN to recognize the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people would never have been possible without it, and declared further that *"only through a continuance of this struggle can the political and diplomatic successes be secured"*.<sup>1418</sup>

Repeatedly, there were altercations with pro-Israeli and Jewish activists. In November 1974, there was a physical confrontation between a Jewish passerby and the PC

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<sup>1415</sup> "Telefongespräch Zwischen Sergio Mantovani Und Mauro Abbühl" 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1416</sup> "Telefongespräch Zwischen René Horlacher Und Christine Guinand" January 15, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229; *ibid.*

<sup>1417</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, "Palästina-Komitee Zürich" March 4, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229; "شؤون فلسطينية - Biography Of Prof. Sami Musallam," accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.shuun.ps/page-440.html>.

<sup>1418</sup> Palästinakomitee Zürich, *10 Jahre Nationaler Befreiungskampf*, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

Zurich activist Gertrud Germann at an info booth of the PC Zurich.<sup>1419</sup> When members of WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organisation) held their traditional public sale of fruits to raise money for a Swiss agricultural school in Israel in March, they were met by PC Zurich activists, who distributed anti-Israeli flyers. The flyers criticized that those educated at the school may soon work in the settlements. *"The land was called Palestine. The farmer and his countrymen were Palestinians. That was the case at the turn of the century and in the following years,"* the text further asserted.<sup>1420</sup> After a vivid discussion, one of the PC Zurich activists spat in a passerby's face, after which he attacked her physically.<sup>1421</sup>

The last public event of the PC Zurich was held on March 20, 1976, with the screening of the movie *Revolution until Victory*. The flyer for the event again caused controversy, and was reported to the police for its allegedly anti-Semitic content – with no consequences. Its text claimed that there was a clear distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. The Palestinians and the anti-Zionists were fighting against all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism. It further asserted that the Zionists had always advocated the expulsion of the Palestinian native population (Ger. *Urbevölkerung*). Moreover, citing the recent UN resolution, the text stated that Zionism was a racist ideology. Like anti-Semitism, it supposedly upheld the principle that Jews could not live with non-Jews on the basis of equal rights. *"The state of Israel is no 'refuge for persecuted Jews', but a tool of Imperialism."*<sup>1422</sup> Despite the distribution of flyers beforehand, only 60 persons attended the movie screening, leaving Lucien Leites, the main organizer, severely disappointed. The event was disrupted by a bomb

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<sup>1419</sup> Stadtpolizei Zürich, "Palästina-Komitee Zürich" December 15, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1420</sup> Palästinakomitee Zürich, *Orangen Aus Jaffa - Alle Jahre Wieder...*, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1421</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, "Palästina-Komitee Zürich (Flugplatzaktion)" March 21, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1422</sup> Palästinakomitee Zürich, *Zionismus Ist Rassismus*, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.



threat, which proved to be false.<sup>1423</sup> Pro-Palestinian activism seemed to be in decline at this point. Shortly after the event, the PC Zurich was disbanded with its members establishing the Zurich branch of the newly formed *Gesellschaft Schweiz Palästina* GSP (Engl. Swiss Palestine Association) on April 22, 1976. In a press release, GSP pledged its support to *“the fight of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the political guidelines of the Palestinian Liberation Organization PLO – the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.”*<sup>1424</sup> There was another change in the Swiss pro-Palestinian scene in 1976. Afif Safieh, a graduate of the Catholic University in Leuven and former GUPS activist, started his work as the PLO representative at the observer mission to the UN, staying for two years in the country. It was the beginning of an illustrious diplomatic career. He stayed in Switzerland for only two years but would take an active role within the GSP.<sup>1425</sup> In 1977, the GSP had branches in Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, Zurich and in the Italian-speaking canton. The influence of the PLO within the GSI remained strong, as PLO representative at the UN Afif Safieh was a member of its National Commission, which coordinated the activities of the different GSP chapters. The requests Safieh had submitted to the GSP General Assembly in 1977, which dealt with the GSP’s relations with other organizations, had also all been accepted by the attendants. The PLO’s apparent influence led the author of the report to the conclusion that at this point in time *“the GSP understood itself as an instrument of the PLO or let itself be used in that way.”*<sup>1426</sup> However, some members of the GSP disagreed with the group’s role as a recipient of orders of the PLO and tried to steer it in a more independent direction. They considered Palestine to be just one of the many battlefields against Imperialism and Capitalism. The Swiss

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<sup>1423</sup> Stadtpolizei Zürich, “Palästina-Komitee Zürich” March 24, 1975, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1424</sup> Stadtpolizei Zürich, “Gesellschaft Schweiz Palästina Sektion Zürich” April 23, 1976, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229.

<sup>1425</sup> Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, 351; Stadtpolizei Zürich, “Gesellschaft Schweiz-Palästina (GSP)” July 19, 1978, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1235.

<sup>1426</sup> Stadtpolizei Zürich, “Gesellschaft Schweiz-Palästina (GSP).”

authorities speculated that the recent arrests of Albonico, Mantovani and Bacchetta in early 1978 were the results of these internal rifts.<sup>1427</sup> What had happened?

In April 1978, GSP members were arrested in Lebanon and Egypt for their involvement in the planning of terrorist attacks. The defendants included two prominent figures, Sergio Mantovani and Gian Battista Bacchetta, who had both had leading functions in the PC Zurich. Mantovani, Gian Battista Bacchetta and his wife were accused of having planned terrorist attacks against an Israeli military delegation in collaboration together with Palestinian terrorist groups and the Italian Red Brigades. The Egyptians believed that Giorgio Bellini, who entertained contacts with the Red Brigades, was the mastermind behind the plans. Bellini denied this.<sup>1428</sup> Soon afterwards, there was another terrorist incident involving a GSP activist. On May 6, 1978, the 23-year old Swiss law student Nannie Albonico was arrested at Beirut Airport before boarding a flight to Zurich, when a time-bomb was discovered in her luggage. After she initially claimed that she had received the package containing the explosives from a Palestinian friend without knowing of its content, she later admitted that she was supposed to deliver it to a Palestinian agent in Switzerland.<sup>1429</sup> Albonico was apparently also a member of the GSP, underscoring the fact that Swiss pro-Palestinian activists were not only involved in the PLO's networks of propaganda, but also of terrorism. The police also found several internal documents of the GSP in her possession.<sup>1430</sup> This was not the only incident which linked the Swiss pro-Palestinian activists to international terrorism.

As already discussed above, there were several past incidents in which members of the Swiss pro-Palestinian scene were shown to be connected to the PLO terrorist

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<sup>1427</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1428</sup> "Die Verhaftung von Giorgio Bellini," *NZZ*, February 21, 1981; Thomas W. Lippman, "Egypt Probes 'Terrorist' Group's Links Abroad," *Washington Post*, April 25, 1978, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/04/25/egypt-probes-terrorist-groups-links-abroad/c7b8f4b5-2b22-4802-846a-a71bd5da99e6/>.

<sup>1429</sup> "Schweizer Studentin vor Gericht in Beirut," *NZZ*, June 14, 1978.

<sup>1430</sup> Stadtpolizei Zürich, "Gesellschaft Schweiz-Palästina (GSP)."

network in Europe, which was engaged in a campaign of terror attacks in Europe against Jewish, Israeli and Jordanian targets. It is therefore worthwhile to take a closer look at terrorist operations in Europe. In the early 1970s, the Algerian Mohammed Boudia was the central figure in the PFLP terrorist network in Europe, also known as the Haddad Network. On June 27, 1973, Boudia was killed by the Israeli secret service in Paris. After his death, the PFLP operations in Europe came to be known as commando Boudia. Wadie Haddad appointed Michel Moukharbal as its leader, with Marxist Venezuelan Ilyich Ramírez Sánchez, who was then lingering in London, as his assistant. Sánchez would eventually become even more notorious than Mohammed Boudia, assuming the nom de guerre, Carlos the Jackal. In June 1975, Carlos killed Moukharbal and several officers of the French secret service, DST, after Moukharbal became an informer for the service.<sup>1431</sup> Interestingly, Boudia had numerous links to Switzerland. Since summer 1972, Boudia was a frequent guest in Geneva, where he occasionally met with François Genoud, Daoud Barakat and Bachir Boumaza, the leader of the Algerian opposition party *Rassemblement unifié des Revolutionnaires*, which actively supported the military struggle of the Palestinians.<sup>1432</sup> The Swiss believed that Mohammed Boudia was involved in several terrorist attacks during this period, including the preparation of a terrorist attack on the transit camp in Schoenau in Austria. The camp was the main gate for Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union on their way to Israel. The conspirators had left several traces in Switzerland. In late January, two Arab groups of three persons each travelled separately to Austria. The first group arrived in Vienna on January 20, 1973 from Geneva airport and were arrested for their false Israeli passports. During their interrogation in Vienna, the Syrian terrorists revealed that they had received the falsified Israeli documents during their three day stay in Geneva from January 17-19 from an unidentified person, whom the

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<sup>1431</sup> David Yallop, *To the Ends of the Earth* (Hachette UK, 2014); Mark Ensalaco, *Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 78–83.

<sup>1432</sup> Attorney General, “Der palästinensische Terror,” 6, 24; Arezki Metref and Makhoulf Maouli, “A Propos de Bachir Boumaza et de Mohamed Boudia,” *Le Soir d’Algérie*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.lesoirdalgerie.com/articles/2010/11/01/article.php?sid=108120&cid=41>.

Swiss believed to have been Mohammed Boudia. In January 1973, Boudia was staying in Geneva, where he maintained close contact with the members of the PC Geneva. Two women of the committee, Anne-Marie Bollier and her friend Catherine Erschoff, seem to have worked for him.<sup>1433</sup>

Both women were part of Daoud Barakat's circle in Geneva and active in the pro-Palestinian scene of the city. They regularly hosted Arabs, who had connections to the PLO and were on transit in Geneva, in their apartments. For Boudia, they fulfilled mostly menial tasks, having a function similar to that of a secretary: Making his flight reservations, picking him up from the airport, and hosting the various Arab visitors, who were connected to Boudia, during their stay in Geneva. On January 15, 1973, Erschoff booked a flight for Boudia to Paris for a meeting with a certain Carlos. Boudia told Carlos that he had received 100'000 francs, without further information. Is this Carlos identical with Carlos the Jackal? It is likely, since Carlos was a member of Boudia's entourage. Boudia returned to Geneva on January 18, departing one day later for Vienna and returning again on the 21st. The travel pattern coincided with that of the Palestinian terrorists. On January 23, the police arrested Bollier and one day later Erschoff for questioning. However, they were released on the same day. In the aftermath of the arrest, the Geneva police observed that the pro-Palestinian activists in Geneva proceeded with greater caution. They no longer talked openly about sensible issues on the phone but rather restricted their conversations to the propaganda work of the PC Geneva.<sup>1434</sup> However, they clearly continued to be linked to the Boudia network. Thus, Anne-Marie Bollier maintained contact with Michel Moukharbal, the future leader of the PFLP operations in Europe, who was residing in Geneva in March 1973.<sup>1435</sup> In November 1974, Bollier quit her work for the committee. This however did not mean an end to her activity for the PLO. Just one month later, she hosted Aweida Faisal in her flat. Faisal was the chief of the Department of Foreign

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<sup>1433</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, "Rapport sur contrôles téléphoniques" June 3, 1973, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1232.

<sup>1434</sup> Ibid.; Attorney General, "Der palästinensische Terror," 19.

<sup>1435</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, "Rapport sur contrôles téléphoniques."

Affairs of the PLO. He later headed the PLO offices in India and the UK. But the Swiss authorities also suspected him of being a key man of Black September, one who was responsible for recruiting, training and sending terrorists to Europe.<sup>1436</sup>

#### 7.6 Seeking recognition: The PLO Office in London

As discussed above, PLO representatives had worked at the Arab League Offices since the mid-1960s. After Fatah's takeover of the PLO in 1969, it significantly expanded its presence in Europe. In 1970, the PLO appointed Abdallah Frangi as their representative at the office of the Arab League in Bonn in West Germany, at this time the most important Fatah base in Europe. Frangi joined a growing list of PLO representatives in Europe, which included Mahmoud Hamchari in Paris, Wael Zwaiter in Rome, Said Hammami (Hamameh) in London and Naim Khader in Belgium.<sup>1437</sup> The PLO largely inherited this network from the GUPS. Thus, Frangi and Hamchari had served as GUPS representatives before assuming their functions for the PLO.<sup>1438</sup> In March 1971, the Arab League decided to attach official PLO representatives to all of its 14 Offices and to equip them with a yearly budget of \$100'000. The PLO however wished to open independent PLO offices in 12 of the 14 countries where the Arab League operated information offices. Besides the US, these were Switzerland, the UK, Germany, France, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, China, Pakistan, Chile and two others.<sup>1439</sup> The negotiations between the PLO and Switzerland will be discussed in detail in the next sub-chapter.

Said Hammami, the PLO representative in the UK, started working at the Arab League Office in London in September 1971 under the official title of an information attaché of the PLO. He would have monthly meetings with the other Arab ambassadors in the

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<sup>1436</sup> Département de justice et police de Genève, "Contrôle téléphonique."

<sup>1437</sup> Frangi, *Der Gesandte*, 157–58.

<sup>1438</sup> "List of GUPS Representatives."

<sup>1439</sup> R. M. Evans, "Minutes of Conversation with Mr. Said Hammami" March 30, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

British capital.<sup>1440</sup> On January 18, 1972, the director of the Arab League Office in London sent a request to the Home Secretary for opening a PLO office in the British capital. Its aim was to conduct propaganda and gain support for the PLO rather than liaising with the British government. The letter further claimed that such offices had already been set up and officially recognized in all Arab countries and Switzerland.<sup>1441</sup> As we have seen, this latter claim was not true, as Switzerland had explicitly rejected the Arab League demand. The FCO however, which assumed responsibility for the issue, took the claim at face value and only evaluated it five months later. While some in the security establishment opposed the PLO's plans, the general consensus within the FCO was that there were no legal grounds for preventing the setup of the office, as long as it acted within the limits of British law.<sup>1442</sup> The status of the PLO office at the UN in New York, which had operated since 1965, possibly influenced the British position. The State Department informed the British that the PLO office and its staff enjoyed neither diplomatic nor official status. The PLO presence did not equate to its recognition by the US.<sup>1443</sup>

During the next three months, the FCO and the Home Office disagreed on the PLO plans. Initially, the responsible Home Office official, G. Emerson, equally saw no legal ground for preventing the establishment of the office, despite being of the opinion that the Home Secretary wished them to find "*indirect means*" to do exactly that. According to British Law, he maintained, only individuals posing a security risk to the country, but not organizations, may be banned from entering. The only possible way to prevent the

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<sup>1440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1441</sup> Ahmed Anis and Arab Information Centre London, "Letter to Home Secretary Reginald Maudling," January 18, 1972, FCO 17/1612; Evans, "Minutes of Conversation with Mr. Said Hammami."

<sup>1442</sup> D. A. Gore-Booth and Near Eastern Department, "Note for the File 'Application from the PLO to Set up an Office in London'" January 28, 1972, FCO 17/1612; A.D. Parsons and D. A. Gore-Booth, "Memo on Application from the PLO to Set up an Office in London" January 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1443</sup> State Department, "Telegram to US Embassy London on PLO in Britain," January 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

establishment was to prove that the PLO was “*associated with acts of violence, which might be committed in this country.*” He concluded with the surprising statement that he “*had looked through various Security Service reports about the PLO over the past few years and I have not been able to find evidence amounting to this, although there are indications in that direction.*”<sup>1444</sup> However, it seems to be the case that opposition from the Home Office grew stiffer in the coming weeks. In a memorandum in late March 1972, Emerson argued that although PLO officials had until now primarily engaged in propaganda and it was not possible to prove that the PLO was directly involved in terrorism outside of the Middle East, the PLO’s member organizations, foremost the PFLP, were involved in terrorism and it was therefore advisable to prevent the PLO office’s establishment.<sup>1445</sup> A memo on April 11 noted that Fatah controlled the PLO and that there was an “*indirect association*” between Fatah and the terrorists involved in a recent assassination attempt on the Jordanian ambassador in London. According to the memo, most Arabs in the country sympathized with Fatah. The Security Service also continued to oppose the establishment of the PLO office, fearing increased terrorism and the lack of sufficient manpower to monitor it.<sup>1446</sup>

In spite of these concerns, the FCO maintained its support for the office. A memorandum by D. A. Gore-Booth mentioned the lack of legal means to prevent it, as he analyzed in the third paragraph of the document. Still, Britain could have declared the PLO to be a terrorist organization, which would have provided the legal grounds, or have just ignored the request. Gore-Booth was unequivocal about the fact that these actions were not feasible politically because of the support the PLO enjoyed from Arab countries and from pro-Arab parliamentarians: “*In theory it might be possible either to ignore the PLO request or to indicate that it was unwelcome. In the first case there is little doubt that the PLO or the Arab League or both would renew their request or,*

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<sup>1444</sup> G. Emerson and Home Office, “Memo on Application from the PLO to Set up an Office in London” March 1, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1445</sup> G. Emerson and Home Office, “Memo on Application from the PLO to Set up an Office in London” March 20, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1446</sup> G. Emerson, “Memo on Proposed Establishment of a London Office of the PLO” April 11, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

*alternatively, get one of the pro-Arab Members of Parliament to ask a Parliamentary Question which would almost certainly force us to reveal the position set out in paragraph 3. In the second case it would be disadvantageous to our relations with the Arab world to suggest that the PLO application was unwelcome (...). Nor for political reasons could we maintain the view that the PLO is itself a terrorist organisation (although some of its component bodies certainly are). The PLO is a member of the Arab League and has an interest in acting respectably (...).*"<sup>1447</sup> Thus, expectedly, the decision to allow a PLO office on British soil was not only based on legal considerations, but on political ones as well.

On April 14, the Home Office finally consented to the PLO plans. Two weeks later, on April 27, 1972, A.D. Parsons from the NENAD called Said Hammami to inform him of the positive reply to the Arab League request. He cautioned him that the British would not condone any terrorist activities emerging from the office, a warning which Hammami readily accepted. However, Hammami told Parsons that the friendly relationship between the Soviet Union and the PLO made it appropriate for him to wait for the opening of the PLO Office in Moscow before realizing his plans in London. On a more personal note, he further let him know that he did not believe in Pan-Arabism, which had let down the Palestinians. Instead, he advocated an incremental approach with the goal of establishing a binational state. First, the Palestinians would establish a secular state in Gaza and the West Bank, which would eventually encompass Israel. Whether he wanted to achieve this aim through conquest or through consent he did not explain.<sup>1448</sup>

The British embassy in Tel Aviv was uncomfortable with the decision. On May 8, a new PFLP action had made headlines, when PFLP terrorists hijacked a Sabena aircraft at Lod airport near Tel Aviv. In a commando action, two of the hostage-takers were eventually shot, but one of the hostages died as well. British ambassador to Israel E.J.W. Barnes argued that in light of these events, the permission to open the PLO

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<sup>1447</sup> D. A. Gore-Booth, "Memo on the PLO" April 12, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1448</sup> . D. Parsons, "Letter to Mr. Craig on Conversation with Said Hammami," May 1, 1972, FCO 17/1612; D. A. Gore-Booth, "Letter to G. Emerson," May 2, 1972, FCO 17/1612.



office was inappropriate and amounted to an unwelcome “*extension of Fedayeen activities*”.<sup>1449</sup> In another letter in June 1972, ambassador Barnes again expressed his criticism for the decision, remarking that if there had been sufficient political will to block the PLO office, ways could have been devised to do so. Moreover, he argued that the PLO’s involvement in violence jeopardized a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which he had hoped was in Britain’s interests. He therefore asked for a revision of the decision.<sup>1450</sup> He adduced a resolution by the Political Committee of the Council of Europe, which asked its member states to shut down the PLO offices because they were involved in the planning of hijackings and sabotage.<sup>1451</sup>

As we have seen, the British decision to allow the establishment was also influenced by fears that the Arabs would react negatively to a rejection. Not all agreed. The British ambassador in Israel faulted the FCO for its assessment that the Arab states would generally welcome the decision, citing the example of Egypt, which had recently criticized the Palestinian organizations. Consequently, he implied that the British were more worried about the opinion of the Arab world than the Arabs themselves by asking “*need we be plus Arabe que les Arabes?*”<sup>1452</sup> The British ambassador in Lebanon also emphasized the fact that the decision somewhat embarrassed the Lebanese government, which was itself fighting against the Palestinian guerrillas. He therefore asked London to treat the affair discretely, something which was not easy to realize.<sup>1453</sup>

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<sup>1449</sup> E. J. M. Barnes and British Embassy Tel Aviv, “Letter to James Craig,” May 15, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1450</sup> British Embassy Tel Aviv and John Barnes, “Your Telegram No 308 and Related Correspondence: PLO Office in London,” June 26, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1451</sup> British Embassy Tel Aviv and John Barnes, “Canberra Telegram No 960: PLO Office,” June 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1452</sup> E. J. M. Barnes and British Embassy Tel Aviv, “Letter to James Craig,” May 26, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1453</sup> British Embassy Beirut, “Your Telno 361: PLO Office in London,” June 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

As expected, the criticism from the Israelis was even more severe. In a phone call on May 18, the Israeli ambassador intimated to NENAD chief Joseph Godber that the Israelis had intelligence that the PLO Office in Belgrade had been used as a “*base for subversion*”. He also underlined that the British were setting a precedent, as other requests for establishing PLO offices had been declined.<sup>1454</sup> According to the Israelis, the PLO had only been allowed to set up offices in Yugoslavia, Mauretania, China and North Korea.<sup>1455</sup> On June 26, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban lodged a formal protest with Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home, stating: “*My government is concerned at this development which will enable an organization, openly committed to the destruction of the state of Israel and to the murder of its citizens, to operate against my country under the protection of a liberal tradition which it holds in contempt.*”<sup>1456</sup> In a letter to the FCO on June 27, 1972, the Israeli ambassador in London, Michael Comay, underlined the view that propaganda and terror were two sides of the same coin: “*The information work in which, according to your letter, the PLO office in London will engage, is an integral part of the general function of the PLO, which is to carry on operations by violence against Israel and other countries. The political and propaganda aspects of its activities cannot be divorced from other aspects.*”<sup>1457</sup> The Israeli ambassador also suggested that Britain was breaching the UN Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States of 1970 by harboring the PLO. He cited the following passage: “*No State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another State, or*

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<sup>1454</sup> P. M. Lavery, “Minutes of Conversation Between Home Secretary and Israeli Ambassador on PLO Office in London” May 19, 1972, FCO 17/1612; Joseph Godber, “Letter to Michael Comay,” June 7, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1455</sup> Israeli Embassy London and Michael S. Comay, “Letter to Minister of State Joseph Godber,” June 27, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1456</sup> Abba Eban, “Telegram to FCO,” June 26, 1972, FCO 17/1612; “Israel Protest at Palestine Office in London,” *The Times*, June 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1457</sup> Israeli Embassy London and Comay, “Letter to Minister of State Joseph Godber.”

*interfere in civil strife in another State.*"<sup>1458</sup> In a debate in the Knesset on July 5, 1974, Eban again cited the resolutions of the Political Committee of the Council of Europe regarding the PLO offices and the UN Declaration to criticize the British plans, warning of a deterioration of British-Israeli relations.<sup>1459</sup>

The British however were not ready to acquiesce to the Israeli pleas. A memo by NENAD on the letter from the Israeli ambassador again warned that *"If we were to brand the PLO as a terrorist organization in itself (which would be the only way to provide ourselves with a legal basis for preventing the PLO office opening) we should provoke a very hostile reaction from the entire Arab world, not excluding Saudi Arabia and the other conservative regimes."*<sup>1460</sup> Thus, despite repeated assertions to the contrary from the FCO, we see that the decision not to intervene with the opening of the PLO office was as much – and possibly more – grounded on political as on legal reasoning.

The whole affair received significant coverage in the press, which was often negative. The *Daily Telegraph* called the prospective PLO office a *"Hi-Jack Office"* and criticized the British decision.<sup>1461</sup> The PLO office received wide coverage in the press, most of it critical. In a letter to the editor of the *Times*, Said Hammami defended himself and the PLO, alleging that they were the victim of a political campaign orchestrated by Israel and its supporters. The prospective office would *solely "act as an information centre to lobby support in the media and political parties and to help the Palestinian refugees and student resident in Britain (...)"*<sup>1462</sup> He denied that the PLO was involved in terrorism, but refrained from condemning it, stating: *"A small minority of Palestinians*

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<sup>1458</sup> Eban, "Telegram to FCO."

<sup>1459</sup> British Embassy Tel Aviv, "Telegram to FCO on PLO Office," July 5, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1460</sup> A. J. M. Craig, "Memo on Letter by Israel Ambassador Comay," June 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1461</sup> "Hi-Jack Office in London," *Daily Telegraph*, June 30, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1462</sup> Said Hammami, "PLO Office in Britain," *The Times*, July 6, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

*have been forced to resort to methods of violence as the only way open to them to secure a public hearing of their case.*"<sup>1463</sup>

The Home Secretary also had to defend himself from criticism in the parliament. MP Michael Fiedler personally addressed the FCO to protest the step. In its response, the FCO cited the alleged fact that Britain did not create a precedent, as there were already several independent PLO offices in other countries.<sup>1464</sup> The problem was that this was not entirely true. The British authorities had taken this claim, which had first been mentioned in the Arab League letter from January 1972, at face value. Only in late June 1972 did the FCO venture to examine these claims, when it sent an inquiry to the respective countries to investigate the nature of the PLO presence.<sup>1465</sup> The British embassies in Bern, Santiago de Chile, and Islamabad responded to the inquiry, informing the FCO that the PLO did not possess independent offices in their countries.<sup>1466</sup> This contravened the FCO's earlier statements, which had relied on false information by the Arab League. The FCO therefore apologized to MP Michael Fiedler, but it did not disclose that its original decision to allow the office partly rested on false assumptions. Moreover, the FCO continued to believe that the PLO owned official offices in France and the US.<sup>1467</sup> In fact, France only agreed to recognize the PLO

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<sup>1463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1464</sup> Joseph Godber, "Letter to MP Michael Fiedler," June 27, 1972, FCO 17/1612; Jodber Godber, "Letter to MP Michael Fiedler," July 3, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1465</sup> NENAD (Near East and North African Department), "Telegram to Embassies in Bern, Bonn, Islamabad, Santiago," June 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1466</sup> British Embassy Islamabad, "Telegram to FCO on PLO Office in Pakistan," June 30, 1972, FCO 17/1612; British Embassy Bern, "Telegram to FCO on PLO Office in Switzerland," June 30, 1972, FCO 17/1612; British Embassy Santiago de Chile, "Telegram to FCO on PLO Office in Chile," June 29, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1467</sup> Jodber Godber, "Memo on Letter from MP Michael Fiedler" July 3, 1972, FCO 17/1612; D. A. Gore-Booth, "Memo on PLO" July 3, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

office in France in 1975.<sup>1468</sup> In another letter to the Minister of State, Michael Fidler drew attention to the fact that the French were not aware of a PLO Office in Paris. When the FCO checked the issue with the French, they confirmed that the PLO representative in Paris was not working in an official function, but only as a journalist. They were also reluctant to discuss the issue with the British, quite possibly because of the blurry and quasi-legal nature of the PLO presence in the French capital. The NENAD blamed the French for the error of allegedly misinforming them. To avoid a public embarrassment, the NENAD therefore suggested to the Minister of State to treat the issue confidentially and to call Michael Fiedler in person.<sup>1469</sup> On June 4, 1972, the PLO office was also discussed in the House. A motion called the decision deplorable.<sup>1470</sup>

Reports that PLO chief Yassir Arafat was planning to attend the opening of the office, if true, were liable to further incense the situation.<sup>1471</sup> Besides the Israelis, the Jordanians were also worried by Arafat's visit.<sup>1472</sup> However, the FCO had not received a request for a visa by Arafat.<sup>1473</sup> The FCO was divided on the question of how to deal with such a request. A memo by A.D. Parsons of the FCO advised against the admission of Arafat – not because he was the chairman of the PLO, but for his leadership of Fatah. The visit would lead to a deterioration of the relations with Israel and Jordan and inflame anti-Arab opinion in the country, which would be far more

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<sup>1468</sup> Timo Behr, "France, Germany and Europe's Middle East Dilemma" (Johns Hopkins University, 2009), 77.

<sup>1469</sup> D. A. Gore-Booth, "Memo on PLO Office in Paris" July 6, 1972, FCO 17/1613; P. M. Laver, "Memo on PLO Office in Paris" July 6, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1470</sup> House of Commons, "Notices of Questions and Motions" July 4, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1471</sup> "Arafat for UK," *The Times*, June 20, 1972, FCO 17/1612.

<sup>1472</sup> D. A. Gore-Booth, "Letter to Mr Laver and Mr Parsons," July 3, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1473</sup> British Embassy Beirut, "Telegram to FCO on PLO Office in London and Yasir Arafat," July 3, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

damaging for the relations with the Arab world than the mere refusal of the visa.<sup>1474</sup> Gore-Booth agreed that Arafat should be prevented from coming to London. However, he recommended that instead of refusing him the visa, the FCO should signal to him that he was unwelcome and that it was in his interest to withdraw his request in order to avoid a public scandal.<sup>1475</sup> Under Secretary Martin Le Quesne tended towards the opinion of Gore-Booth. In particular, he made the case that the internal pressure by the PLO's critics and the supporters of Israel would be something that the FCO could readily cope with: *"I am afraid, however, that unfortunately, I am doubtful whether it can be said that there are likely to be violent demonstrations, etc. in the event of his coming. There will be a row in House, the correspondence columns of The Times, and on the media, no doubt. But I do not think that it can be said that, on past form, the Jewish lobby is likely to react by taking to the Streets. (...) Moreover, with to(?) opinion this country, a refusal of a visa to Arafat would surely produce at least as strong a public reaction from the pro-Arab lobby as a grant will from the anti-Arab lobby."*<sup>1476</sup> This suggests that the non-violence of the pro-Israel supporters worked against their interests.

Eventually, Said Hammami decided against establishing an independent PLO Office and remained attached to the Arab League Office.<sup>1477</sup> When the famous entrepreneur and Zionist Joseph Edward Sieff was attacked by a PFLP hitman, who was later revealed to have been Carlos the Jackal, there were calls to expel the PLO representative from the UK. However, NENAD opposed this, stating that the Home Secretary had found no evidence that Hammami was involved in illegal activities and out of fear *"to provoke the very hostile reaction that would undoubtedly be caused in*

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<sup>1474</sup> A.D. Parsons, "Memo on Proposed Establishment of a London Office of the PLO" July 4, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1475</sup> FCO, "Background Note to PLO Office in London" July 3, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1476</sup> C. M. Le Quesne, "Memo on Proposed Establishment of a London Office of the PLO" July 5, 1972, FCO 17/1613.

<sup>1477</sup> Alec Douglas-Home, "Letter to the Home Secretary," January 8, 1974, TNA FCO 93/490.

*the Arab World if we were to expel the representative (...).*<sup>1478</sup> This fear invariably protected the PLO personnel in Europe.

## 7.7 A PLO Office in Switzerland? The First Round of Negotiations

One has to consider the circumstances to understand Switzerland's negotiations with the PLO. As discussed in Chapter 6, Switzerland was struck by several terrorist attacks, authored by the PFLP, in the period 1969-1970. After the conviction of the PFLP terrorists responsible for the Kloten attack in January 1969, Switzerland was fearful of retaliations from the Arab world.<sup>1479</sup> On February 21, 1970, a Swissair plane was indeed struck by a PFLP bombing, murdering 47 passengers and crew. This probably happened by mistake, as the original target had been an El-Al plane. Still, it was set to influence Switzerland. In September 1970, the Western world faced the biggest terrorism crisis until September 11, 2001. On September 6, 1970 at midday, Palestinian terrorists hijacked three airplanes in mid-air. A fourth attempt to hijack an El-Al machine on its way to New York failed: One of the two terrorists was killed and the other, the notorious Leila Khaled, subdued. After the plane was landed at Heathrow Airport, she was incarcerated. Two airplanes, a Swissair machine on its way to New York and a TWA Airlines plane, were flown to the abandoned British airstrip, Dawson's Field near Zerqa, a suburb of Amman. The third hijacked airplane, a Panamerican craft, was landed in Cairo and blown up one day later after the release of the passengers. An ultimatum delivered on September 7 demanded the freeing of the three PFLP convicts in Switzerland, three terrorists who stood behind the bomb targeting El-AL passengers in Munich in February 1970, and Leila Khaled in return for the non-Jewish hostages. The PFLP demanded each state to enter separate negotiations. The fate of the Jewish American hostages however would depend on the release of prisoners incarcerated in Israeli prisons.<sup>1480</sup> The affected countries formed

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<sup>1478</sup> D. A. Gore-Booth, "Memo on PLO" January 8, 1974, FCO 93/490.

<sup>1479</sup> "Telegram Sent by the Federal Aliens Police to Embassies in Europe, North Africa and Near East" December 23, 1969, CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1480</sup> David Carlton, *The West's Road to 9/11: Resisting, Appeasing and Encouraging Terrorism since 1970* (Springer, 2005), 18.

the Bern Group to deal with the hostage situation. The International Red Cross acted as a mediator between the Bern Group and the PFLP.<sup>1481</sup> Britain and Germany broke the consensus, entering into direct negotiations with the PFLP.<sup>1482</sup>

The civil war in Jordan, which had started on the day of the hijackings, further complicated the situation. At the end of September 1970, Egyptian dictator Jamal Nasser negotiated a ceasefire between the PLO and Jordan at the Arab summit in Cairo. As a result, the PLO pulled its forces from Jordan and moved them to Lebanon. On British stipulation, Nasser also included a section on the hostage crisis in the deal. In exchange for the release of the hostages on or around October 1, the European countries and Israel were to free their Palestinian prisoners. On September 27, the British decided not to prosecute Leila Khaled.<sup>1483</sup> The Swiss soon followed suit. On September 30, 1970, the three terrorists were picked up at the prison in Regensdorf, a suburb of Zurich. Shortly before their departure at 11:50 p.m., the police presented them with an envelope, containing one thousand Swiss Francs. The money was donated by François Genoud and distributed among the three convicts.<sup>1484</sup> The same day, François Genoud flew to Beirut and subsequently to Cairo, where he stayed until October 10.<sup>1485</sup> Unlike the British and the Germans, the Swiss were not ready to negotiate directly with the PFLP or the PLO.<sup>1486</sup> This would soon change.

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<sup>1481</sup> Ibid., 18–20.

<sup>1482</sup> Aviva Guttman, “Une Coalition Antiterroriste Sous l’égide d’un Pays Neutre: La Réponse Suisse Au Terrorisme Palestinien, 1969-1970,” *Relations Internationales*, no. 3 (2015): col. 27.

<sup>1483</sup> Carlton, *The West’s Road to 9/11*, 34.

<sup>1484</sup> Kantonspolizei Zürich, “Memo on Donation of François Genoud to Mohammed Abu El-Heiga,” October 1, 1970, CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1485</sup> Police de Sureté Vaud, “Travel Itinerary of François Genoud,” January 12, 1971, CH-BAR#E4320-05C#1995/234\*137\*.

<sup>1486</sup> Guttman, “Une Coalition Antiterroriste Sous l’égide d’un Pays Neutre,” cols. 35–38.



It has recently been claimed that Switzerland struck a secret deal with the PLO. According to this version of events, the far-left Geneva politician and sociologist, Jean Ziegler, struck a deal with the PLO on behalf of federal councilor Pierre Graber.<sup>1487</sup> If such a deal did indeed happen, it would have to have been concluded in the period between late September 1970, when the release of the terrorists was negotiated, and the start of the negotiations between the PLO and the Swiss authorities in January 1971. Such a deal would have to have been of a very general nature, given that practically all questions regarding the relationship between the PLO the Switzerland were subject to the negotiations. Ziegler, if we assume the theory is true, would have acted rather as a mediator than a negotiator. In fact, I will suggest one possibility that reconciles this version of events with the records at our disposal.

According to the records, the origins of the Swiss-PLO talks lay in the first half of 1970. In May 1970, the Swiss priest Pierre Martin, who was administering the St. Gervais church in Geneva, participated in a conference in Lebanon on the issue of Palestine together with Lebanese Christians and influential Palestinians, who subsequently invited him to visit Syria, Iraq and Jordan. Half a year later, in December 1970, Pierre Martin was approached by Emile Khoury, a member of the national council of the PLO; a certain M. Carbonard, a delegate of the ecumenical council of churches in Algeria; and Mr. Bentoumi, the president of the bar in Algeria, who was part of the defense-team for the three Arab Palestinian terrorists during the Winterthur trial. Bentoumi asks Martin to facilitate the establishment of a PLO office in Geneva. The aims of such an office would be to make contacts with Swiss authorities and political parties, the international organizations present in Geneva and, probably most controversially, “*participating*” in the discussion of the issue of Palestine in Switzerland, an aim which can only be understood as the intension to actively influence this discussion. The group subsequently meets with Hans Ellenberger, the aforementioned anti-Zionist activist and according to the report also the representative of Fatah in Switzerland. Ellenberger is charged by them with the assignment of approaching the Swiss authorities on behalf of the project.<sup>1488</sup> The motives of Pierre Martin for acting as an intermediary between

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Gyr, *Schweizer Terrorjahre*, chap. 8.<sup>1487</sup> Gyr, *Schweizer Terrorjahre*.

<sup>1488</sup> “Conversation with minister Pierre Martin” February 1, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

Swiss authorities and Arab Palestinian nationalists remain obscure. As he confided to Swiss authorities on January 28, 1971, he was hoping that the PLO would eventually engage in secret relations with Israel via the Jewish World Congress also located in Geneva. He himself, as he assured them on this occasion, was in contact with both the current Israeli administration and its opposition and was set on travelling independently to Israel in the near future, plans his Palestinian friends were allegedly aware of.<sup>1489</sup> He also argued that it would only be fair to confront the already existing “*Jewish propaganda apparatus*” in Geneva with a PLO office. Ultimately, this would not lead to conflict but to a dialogue between the adversaries.<sup>1490</sup>

The negotiations between the PLO and the Swiss would eventually start in January 1971. On January 16, 1971, Minister Dr. M. Gelzer from the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs received Ellenberger in his office. During the conversation, Ellenberger informed the minister on the plans to set up a PLO office in Geneva. As the reason for this undertaking, Ellenberger cited the difficult time the Palestinians were living through. It was the time of Black September, the civil war between the PLO and the Jordanian government. These events made it necessary for the Palestinians to act. According to Ellenberger, the future PLO office’s aim was to promote the Palestinian cause by establishing contacts with leading politicians and journalists. If it were not possible to establish an official office at the UNO or at the Swiss government, the PLO would prefer to set up an unofficial PLO office, as, in the words of Ellenberger, the FLN had via the ‘*Croissant Rouge Algérien*’. Ellenberger further stated that Emil Khoury was distancing himself from the terrorist attacks perpetrated against Switzerland. He did not fail to mention that, while the PLO could not make any promises, there would be no similar actions in the future and the establishment of a Palestinian Office in Geneva would certainly help to prevent such attacks.<sup>1491</sup> Either Ellenberger was bluffing or he

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<sup>1489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1490</sup> “Memo on Visit of Dr. Ellenberger and Minister Martin” December 4, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1491</sup> EPD, “Notiz für Botschafter Micheli von Minister Michael Gelzer betreffend Eröffnung eines Palästina- Büros in Genf” January 14, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

was indeed in a position to influence the PLO's actions toward Switzerland. Whether his statements were intended as a threat or not, Gelzer appears to have understood it this way, as he made clear in a confidential note. This suspicion was further corroborated by a report coming from the Swiss embassy in Belgrade at the same time: A Jordanian businessman had informed them that a PLO commando was preparing another terrorist attack in Switzerland.<sup>1492</sup>

In an internal memo, the Swiss listed the chances and risks of an official PLO presence in Geneva in dialectical fashion. The fact that most of the Swiss population sympathized with the Israelis spoke against the opening. The step would certainly be opposed by the Israelis and possibly also by the Jordanians, the memo cautioned. Moreover, taking this step may lead other ethnic groups to also consider opening their own offices. The memo however also mentioned several factors in favor of the PLO office. The Swiss hoped that the opening would steer the Palestinians away from terrorism towards more peaceful, *“primarily (...) journalistic means”*, to advocate their interests.<sup>1493</sup> The open nature of a PLO Office in Geneva was preferable to the current underground activity of Fatah and possibly the PFLP in Geneva. By providing a direct contact, *“it would enable a dialogue in Switzerland and allow us to get to know better this people and its concerns.”*<sup>1494</sup> The memo contended that the opening of the PLO office was not creating a precedent for other independence movements, as the situation of the Palestinians was unique: *“The Palestinians are a victim of decolonization and the guilty conscience of the Europeans; they have lost their homeland and can nowhere else make the world aware of their legitimate claims in an undisturbed and untroubled way.”*<sup>1495</sup> Weighing up the pro- and contra-arguments, the memo advised that the Palestinians be given a residence permit to fight for their cause,

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<sup>1492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1493</sup> EPD, “Eröffnung eines Palästinabüros in Genf” January 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1982/58#317.

<sup>1494</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1495</sup> Ibid.

but that authorizing the opening of an official presence should be delayed for the moment.<sup>1496</sup>

In a meeting of senior officials headed by Gelzer on January 27, the matter was further discussed. Dr. Amstein, head of the Federal Police, vehemently opposed the idea of setting up a PLO office. He did not believe Ellenberger's claim that it would have a moderating effect on Swiss-Arab, respectively Swiss-Palestinian relations. As a counter-argument he evoked the example of Fuad el-Shamali. Despite his presence in Switzerland, Palestinian attacks on Switzerland had continued unabated. Therefore, any hope that the establishment of a PLO office would exert a moderating influence on Palestinian terrorist groups was in vain. Another participant, Dr. Mäder, head of the Swiss Aliens Police, feared the negative repercussions these plans would cause in the Swiss public, giving the advice to keep the character of such an office strongly unofficial.<sup>1497</sup> The Swiss decision-makers were thus pulled between different arguments in favor and against the authorization of such an office. On the one hand, such an office would make it possible to oversee Palestinian activities which otherwise might take place secretly. In addition, a refusal might be understood as a rejection of the Swiss-PLO 'dialogue', which Swiss authorities, also in light of recent terror attacks, considered of the utmost importance. Further, it would provide an opportunity to talk to the Palestinians directly and not via the Arab states. On the other hand, they feared the negative repercussions an authorization might cause in the public opinion. It might be seen as a precedent, effectively inviting rivaling Palestinian and similar international organizations to set up their branches in Switzerland. Lastly, they also mentioned rather casually that the project bore the risk of harming relations with Israel and possibly Jordan.<sup>1498</sup>

In another discussion between Gelzer and the two representatives of the Palestinians, Ellenberger and Pierre Martin on February 18, 1971, Gelzer made it clear that while a

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<sup>1496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1497</sup> "Protokoll der Sitzung betreffend Eröffnung eines Palästina-Büros in Genf" January 27, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1498</sup> "Ouverture d'un bureau palestinien à Genève: les pour et les contre" February 2, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

possible future PLO Office in Geneva could potentially enter into contact with both international organizations and the Swiss authorities, it was to abstain from any interference in Swiss politics. Furthermore, any contact or public statement to the media would require the prior approval of the Swiss authorities. Pierre Martin announced that the Christian PLO central committee member Emile Khoury, who had approached him with the idea in the first place, was nominated for occupying the post of the PLO Office. Like Ellenberger had before, Pierre Martin argued ambiguously that while the presence of a PLO member in Geneva was no guarantee for a suspension of terror attacks, it would certainly help Swiss interests. In return for agreement, he promised in the name of the PLO that Swiss volunteers to the PLO would be refused by them, and that using Switzerland as a hub for arms trafficking would cease. He again insisted that the moderates within the PLO were ready to engage in negotiations with the Jews, as he put it, and that Geneva would be the place where this could happen.<sup>1499</sup>

Gelzer received them again in his office on February 26, this time accompanied by the PLO representatives Mohammed Abu Omar and Daoud Barakat, as had been agreed in the last meeting. They again expressed their wish for the PLO representative in Geneva to entertain relations with both Swiss and international personalities and the media, as well as being able to distribute a brochure published in Frankfurt, emphasizing again, as Gelzer did not fail to notice, the importance that the PLO placed on the “work of information” (*travail d’information*), i.e. propaganda activity. Gelzer put forward the idea that the representative could officially work as a journalist, thus being able to properly address the public. The two PLO members agreed on this proposal. Incidentally, they also mentioned that they were already entertaining similar offices in major cities of the Western world: in Stockholm, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Rome, New York, Paris and Belgrade.<sup>1500</sup>

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<sup>1499</sup> “Entretien du jeudi 18 février à propos de la designation éventuelle à Genève d’un représentant de l’OLP” February 19, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1500</sup> “Note à Monsieur le Secrétaire général du Département: Présence palestinienne à Genève,” February 26, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

At the end of March, Dr. Mäder, head of the Swiss Aliens Police and Dr. Amstein, head of the Federal Police, were still opposing the plans, despite the continuing negotiations between Ellenberger and Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1501</sup> In a meeting held by senior officials on March 10, the prospects for the establishment of an office were brightening. Although tough Mäder and Amstein remained skeptical, the latter pleaded for *“not exaggerating the motive of security, as the Palestinians who present a danger to Switzerland are not the ones of Fatah, but the 2% dissidents (Dr. Habache etc.).”*<sup>1502</sup> He also admitted that the installation of such an office might also facilitate police work. Eventually they agreed on the acceptability of a PLO representative working in Geneva under the title of a journalist, and a continuation of the negotiations.<sup>1503</sup> This notion was rejected by the Federal Council of Switzerland in a note handed out on the first of April, which, on principle, accepted the establishment of a PLO Office in Geneva, but with the condition that it act overtly as a propaganda office for the PLO and not under the cover of journalism.<sup>1504</sup> In late April, Dr. Mäder seems to have had a change of heart. Suddenly everything was developing quickly. In a letter dated April 19, 1971, and signed by the head of the Aliens Police Dr. Mäder, he informed the Federal Department of Justice and Police on the forthcoming plans of establishing a PLO Office in Geneva.<sup>1505</sup> A report on the background of these plans was appended to the letter originating from Mäder’s own department which had a strikingly positive tone regarding the plans, especially in light of his prior skepticism: *“A profound study (...) has led to the conclusion that the advantages of an opening of a Palestinian office in Switzerland appear clearly to be more numerous than the disadvantages. It is appropriate to emphasize that the opening of such an office could contribute to creating a certain*

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<sup>1501</sup> “Protokoll der Sitzung betreffend Eröffnung eines Palästina-Büros in Genf.”

<sup>1502</sup> “Entretien du 10 mars 1971 sur la question de l’ouverture éventuelle à Genève d’un Bureau palestinien” March 15, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1504</sup> “Création d’un bureau d’information palestinien à Genève: Conférence dans le bureau de M. Amstein” April 1, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1505</sup> Dr. Mäder, “Letter to the Federal Department of Justice and Police,” April 19, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

*balance in the area of information on the Middle East, that Switzerland has on the other hand always tried to facilitate a real dialogue between the conflict parties, that it is therefore only fair to authorize the Palestinians to make their own voice heard.*"<sup>1506</sup>

In response, the department of Justice and Police of Geneva agreed in principle on the establishment of a PLO Office, on the condition that the PLO convincingly renounced acts of air piracy and sabotage, something which both Swiss representatives of the PLO, Ellenberger and Pierre Martin, had failed to do before.<sup>1507</sup> In a letter sent by general secretary Thalmann to the Swiss ambassador in Jordan on May 10, 1971, he commissioned him to enter into direct contact with PLO senior member Abu Omar and to present him with a document delineating the framework of an eventual establishment of a PLO Office: The PLO had to submit all public statements to the Swiss beforehand for authorization. This stipulation was dismissed in harsh terms: *"The Geneva authorities seem to forget that the PLO has always militated [Fr. s'est prononcé] against these acts of violence and, you need to believe us, has even condemned them; on the other hand she seems not being capable of preventing them."* Abu Omar was then asked to travel by himself or to send another PLO official to Switzerland in order to finalize the negotiations directly, and not by the intermediaries Ellenberger and Martin,<sup>1508</sup> but apparently Abu Omar preferred to continue the work through these intermediaries, as the guidelines were handed over to them on June 25, 1971.<sup>1509</sup>

On August 2, 1971, the first secretary Alon of the Israeli embassy to Switzerland paid a visit to Brunner of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in order to receive information on the prospective plans to establish a PLO Office in Geneva. He remarked that similar offices, e.g. in Paris, were involved in the coordination of terrorist activities

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<sup>1506</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1507</sup> Department of Justice and Police Geneva, "Letter to Dr. Mäder," May 3, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1508</sup> Ernesto Thalmann, "Letter to the Swiss ambassador in Jordan," May 10, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1509</sup> EPD, "Aktennotiz: Palästinensische Präsenz in Genf" November 18, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1982/58#317.

and cited a currently ongoing trial in Israel, in which it was discovered that five terrorists from France had been trained by Palestinian officials in Paris. Brunner assured Alon that Switzerland would be watchful in order to prevent any such activity.<sup>1510</sup> The ambassador of Jordan, Ibrahim Zreikat, raised similar concerns to Minister Gelzer in a meeting on August 10, fearing that the PLO officials would attack Jordan, especially in light of the changed strategy of the PLO, which was now stressing that “*the way to Tel-Aviv leads through Amman.*”<sup>1511</sup> Despite these objections, the plans for an agreement with the PLO were pursued in the following days.

On August 4, 1971, Brunner received Daoud Barakat, the representative of the PLO at the Arab League in Geneva and prospective chief of the PLO Office in Geneva. On this occasion, Barakat announced his agreement with the guidelines of the Swiss government, which were:

1. Assignment limited to one chief and a co-worker
2. Respect for the Swiss rules concerning political activities of foreigners, abstention from any activities and propaganda against the democratic institutions of Switzerland which could compromise Switzerland's relations with third countries
3. Observance of the resolution of the Swiss Federal Council of February 24, 1948, concerning political speeches of foreigners.<sup>1512</sup>

Furthermore, Barakat informed the Swiss official of his plans to appoint Fuad el-Shamali as his co-worker at the Office. Brunner notified Barakat on the impracticability of this plan, as there was an entry ban on el-Shamali. Moreover Brunner stressed the impossibility of Barakat being a diplomatic member of the Arab League and the chief of the PLO Office at the same time, as the members of the PLO Office could not benefit

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<sup>1510</sup> “Entretien entre Brunner et Alon sur l'ouvrage d'un bureau OLP à Genève” August 4, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1511</sup> “Telegram to the Swiss embassy in Amman,” August 11, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1512</sup> “Letter to Swiss embassies,” August 6, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.



from diplomatic immunity.<sup>1513</sup> Therefore one month later, on September 8, Barakat announced Mrs. Zeinat as the Chief of the Office.<sup>1514</sup> Already two weeks before on August 24, Barakat had sent a letter to the Arab delegations located in Geneva, soliciting them for financial assistance.<sup>1515</sup> Meanwhile the establishment of the Office did not progress, as the PLO, in the eyes of Swiss officials, did not stick to the guidelines, when it announced an opening ceremony for its Office. It thus violated the terms of discretion upheld by the Swiss. Additionally, they were renting bigger locations than the ones agreed upon. But Barakat felt it was the Swiss who were breaking their promises and therefore threatened to abort the project altogether, instead continuing the representation of the Fatah unofficially, as had been the case for the past three years. Despite having had no authorization, the PLO would also continue to distribute its propaganda, as Barakat bragged: *"We have 4'000 addresses for our distribution. Of 4'000 publications imported this way, e.g. from Morocco, about 3'000 make it through."*<sup>1516</sup>

The negotiations seemed to reach a deadlock. Martin threatened in a meeting with ambassador Thalmann on December 3, 1971, that failure of the project could lead to a resurgence of terrorist attacks, including ones aimed at Switzerland. Ambassador Thalmann rebutted any attempts to exert pressure on Switzerland and warned that the Swiss would withdraw their concessions in response. Martin, Dr. Ellenberger and Thalmann were all in agreement that Barakat was not the suitable man for the continuation of the negotiations. As they also ruled out el-Shamali, they opted for Abu Omar as a future partner.<sup>1517</sup> However, the prospects of an agreement seemed to brighten only a few days later, when Barakat and Dr. Ellenberger visited Gelzer on

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<sup>1513</sup> "Note by Dr. Brunner on the meeting with Daoud Barakat" August 5, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1514</sup> "Memo on the Palestinian information office" September 14, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1515</sup> EPD, "Aktennotiz: Palästinensische Präsenz in Genf."

<sup>1516</sup> "Memo for the Head of Department" November 24, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1517</sup> "Memo on Visit of Dr. Ellenberger and Minister Martin."

December 7. Barakat stepped back from some of his demands: The representative location would be abandoned in favor of a more modest one. In addition, only Abdel Majid Zeinat would be appointed to the post. She would run her activities not as an official representative of the PLO, but as a journalist.<sup>1518</sup> The matter was accepted by the PLO, as Barakat communicated to the Swiss officials on December 15.<sup>1519</sup>

A renewed wave of Black September terror affected the negotiations. The same day the PLO and Switzerland had agreed on the establishment of a PLO Office in Geneva, an assassination attempt on Jordan's ambassador to Great Britain, Zeid al Rifai, failed in London. The Fatah-linked group Black September claimed responsibility.<sup>1520</sup> Already one month before, the terror group Black September entered the stage, as it conducted its first operation with the assassination of Jordan's premier, Wasfi al-Tal, on November 28 during his attendance of an Arab League meeting in Cairo. Actually, Black September was not an independent group but rather a Fatah special operations group led by Abu Jihad, which pursued its terrorist attacks in Europe and the Middle East in the years 1971-1974. PLO- and Fatah-leader Arafat claimed responsibility for the attack, thus reducing to absurdity the strong distinction between moderates and extremist fringe groups within the PLO that the Swiss authorities had drawn during their negotiations with the PLO.<sup>1521</sup> A telegram sent by the Swiss embassy in Cairo also contested the distinction between Fatah and Black September, as *"these operations did not fall into the responsibility of dissident Palestinian resistance groups, but were rather offshoots of Fatah and were acting on their impetus and under their control."*<sup>1522</sup>

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<sup>1518</sup> "Memo on Barakat's visit of Minister Gelzer on December December 7th 1971," December 10, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1519</sup> "Memo on Barakat's call" December 15, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1520</sup> Alex Peter Schmid and Ronald D. Crelinsten, *Western Responses to Terrorism* (Psychology Press, 1993), 266.

<sup>1521</sup> Barry Rubin, *Revolution until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, Massachusetts etc.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 37–38.

<sup>1522</sup> Swiss embassy in Cairo, "Telegram No. 395," December 18, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

Only one day after the incident in London, a giant explosion shook the offices of the Jordanian Consulate in Geneva. Consul Ibrahim Zreikat had left the building before in order to inform the police about a suspicious package he had received and was therefore unharmed, but the three police officers sent out to examine it were gravely injured.<sup>1523</sup> Although the National Jordanian Liberation Movement, a hardly-known group which committed two other foiled terrorist attacks, claimed responsibility,<sup>1524</sup> the Jordanian authorities accused Fatah, and linked the attack with the ones in London and Cairo. In line with the rampant anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in the Arab world observed before, they still could not abstain from hinting at an *“international Zionist plan which aims at crushing the national unity of Jordan [...]”*<sup>1525</sup>

In light of this terror wave, the authorization for the project was withdrawn by Dr. Amstein until the authorship of the attacks was clarified. A meeting with Abdel-Majid Zeinat fixed for December 22 was also cancelled.<sup>1526</sup> When Barakat and his contact person met for lunch on December 22, Barakat denied any involvement of Fatah and the PLO as well as himself, el-Shamali and Teubat in the recent terror attacks, as their interests *“were not at all in accordance with the aims of such perpetrators”*. Barakat asserted the belief that these attacks were probably personally motivated acts of revenge, or in the case of the attack in Geneva, perpetrated by the Jordanians themselves in order to put blame on the PLO. The group Black September was *“insignificant”*.<sup>1527</sup> One has to keep in mind that, according to François Genoud, Daoud

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<sup>1523</sup> “Un Colis Piégé Explose Au Consulat de Jordanie,” *La Suisse*, December 17, 1971.

<sup>1524</sup> Edward F. Mickolus and Susan L. Simmons, *The Terrorist List* (Westport, 2011), 97, 461.

<sup>1525</sup> Swiss Embassy in Jordan, “Telegram Nr. 76,” December 17, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1526</sup> “Memo: Aussprache vom 20. Dezember 1971 über das gegen die jordanische Mission in Genf verübte Attentat. Neue Situation” December 21, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1527</sup> “Memo on Lunch with Barakat” December 23, 1971, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

Barakat himself and Shamali were core operatives of this group.<sup>1528</sup> Despite Barakat's assertions, in a report by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council of Switzerland dated January 24, 1972, the postponement of the establishment of the PLO Office in Geneva was announced, a project the realization of which "*cannot be accounted for last but not least in view of the public.*"<sup>1529</sup> The report further stated that hopes of reducing the risks of terror attacks in Switzerland were proven futile by the recent assassination attempt in Geneva. In spite of this, the report advocated the continuation of the dialogue with the PLO, because in the eyes of its author it could not be ignored that this dialogue had helped to improve relations with the Arab world. On the other hand, cancelling the project would carry great risks and could lead to a deterioration of Swiss-Arab relations and possibly to a rekindling of terrorist attacks targeting Switzerland.<sup>1530</sup> As in Britain, this fear was a strong motivating factor in the negotiations.

#### 7.8 A PLO Office in Switzerland? The Second Round of Negotiations

As discussed above, a first attempt to establish an official PLO Office in Geneva ended in a failure in January 1972, after a Black September terrorist attack in Geneva. The PLO however continued to work for an officialization of its presence in Switzerland. Meanwhile, the terrorism wave did not abate. On March 1, 1973, Black September occupied the Saudi Embassy in Khartoum and murdered two Americans and one Belgian diplomat. A *Newsweek* article claimed that Daoud Barakat was a Black September operative himself and had been involved in the Munich massacre. The presence of Daoud Barakat also worried the UN, which feared a possible attack on its premises in Geneva.<sup>1531</sup> In light of the fears about the PLO's extensive activity in Switzerland, the Swiss decided to send Barakat a warning. By this, they hoped "*to prevent, that the Palestinians would become completely careless and further expand*

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<sup>1528</sup> Pean, *L'Extremiste Francois Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 339.

<sup>1529</sup> "Report to the Federal Council of Switzerland on the residence permit for a PLO representative in Geneva" January 24, 1972, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1530</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1531</sup> EPD, "Septembre Noir" March 9, 1973, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

*their basis in Geneva.*<sup>1532</sup> A good-cop, bad-cop tactic was employed to achieve this end, with Attorney General Hans Walder volunteering for the latter role. In a press conference in early March 1973, Walder explicitly hinted at the role Barakat had played in the Munich massacre.<sup>1533</sup> The remarks succeed in provoking a reaction from Barakat.

Black September was a commando unit consisting of Fatah members. Vis-à-vis the Swiss authorities however, Daoud Barakat maintained the charade that Black September was a group independent from the PLO and Fatah. After Walder's press conference, he immediately complained about the Attorney General's comments in a phone-call to Ernesto Thalmann of the EPD, stating that he was unaware of the fact that the Attorney General was investigating him. He also threatened that the comments were drawing attention to Switzerland and that they therefore bore the risk, *"that the terrorists will extend their feelings of revenge again to Switzerland."*<sup>1534</sup> The Swiss obviously tolerated these threats. In another talk between Barakat and the EPD in late March 1973, the Swiss expressed their worries about Fatah's involvement in the Khartoum attack. It had now become obvious that the PLO, through Fatah, was directly involved in terrorism. When the Swiss questioned Barakat's claim that the Fatah operative had acted without instructions, Barakat just smiled. Barakat asserted that the PLO had decided to refuse European volunteers and that he himself had turned down several volunteers in his Office in Geneva. In light of the recent Lod attack, which employed the services of Japanese left-wing terrorists, the Swiss also did not believe him.<sup>1535</sup> A report by the Attorney General on Palestinian terrorism in June 1973 further dispelled the myth that Black September was a separate group, maintaining that it

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<sup>1532</sup> EPD, "Vorsprache beim Bundesanwalt Kairo / Barakat" April 16, 1973, CH-BAR#E2004B#1987/77#195\*.

<sup>1533</sup> EPD, "Memo on PLO" March 7, 1973, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#261\*; EPD, "Vorsprache beim Bundesanwalt Kairo / Barakat."

<sup>1534</sup> EPD, "Memo on PLO."

<sup>1535</sup> Ibid.; EPD, "Vorsprache von Herrn Barakat" March 28, 1973, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

consisted of elements of Fatah.<sup>1536</sup> The PLO leadership's efforts to present itself as a moderating influence on Palestinian terrorist groups enjoyed less and less credibility.

As Germany banned the GUPS and Israel hunted down Fatah operatives in Europe, Switzerland became increasingly important in the PLO's foreign policy. After the killing of the French and Italian PLO representatives Mahmoud Hamchari and Wael Zwaiter in Rome by Israeli agents, Daoud Barakat assumed their responsibilities. In March 1973, Barakat announced that the PLO was also planning to upgrade the PLO's presence in Switzerland, which, together with France, allegedly enjoyed an excellent reputation at the PLO's headquarters. Still, the PLO could not warrant for *"the actions of lone perpetrators and splinter groups"*.<sup>1537</sup> These extension plans were soon confirmed. On June 19, 1973, Abou Omar, a senior member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, who was not identical with the Abou Omar who started the negotiations in 1971, called on the EPD accompanied by Barakat. Acting on the orders of Arafat, he made several official announcements. The PLO respected Swiss neutrality and regretted Palestinian terrorist attacks, which ran counter to their interests and were playing into the hands of Israel. The PLO wished to receive an official status for its presence in Geneva and to upgrade the Office to the PLO's *"window on Europe"*, meaning its headquarters in Europe. In the typical fashion of PLO diplomacy in Europe, Abou Omar's promises of security were accompanied by the thinly-veiled threat of violence. Thus, Abou Omar declared that the PLO would not necessarily be able to halt all terrorist attacks against Switzerland but that it would see to it that Switzerland was no longer a target by punishing the perpetrators. *"(...) Fatah"*, he intimated, *"knows all the perpetrators of terrorist attacks, including the bombers of Geneva (Mission of Jordan)."*<sup>1538</sup> Despite this assertion, the EPD did not press Abou Omar for information about the whereabouts of the Palestinian terrorists responsible for the Würemlingen attack. Alfred Hohl, the deputy chief of the EPD, believed that the rationale behind the PLO's plans in Switzerland was to replace the loss of its infrastructure in Germany, on

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<sup>1536</sup> Attorney General, "Der palästinensische Terror."

<sup>1537</sup> EPD, "Memo on PLO"; EPD, "Vorsprache von Herrn Barakat."

<sup>1538</sup> EPD, "Palästinensische Vertretung in Genf. Besuch Dr. Abou Omar" June 19, 1973, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

which the German authorities had clamped down after the Munich massacre.<sup>1539</sup> Meanwhile, Barakat had become fearful for his own life after receiving information that he was on an Israeli target list. He therefore inquired whether it was possible to receive police protection. The Swiss were generally open to the request. The Federal Police believed Barakat to be a propagandist, not a terrorist.<sup>1540</sup> A recent report from the Attorney General had come to the same conclusion.<sup>1541</sup> As a consequence, Federal Police director André Amstein intervened with the Israelis, warning that the Swiss would stop working with the Israeli security services if anything should happen to Barakat,<sup>1542</sup> apparently with success. However, Barakat's connection to terrorism remains a matter of contention until this day. According to François Genoud's biographer Pierre Péan, al-Shamali, Barakat, Hamchari and Ali Hassan Salameh represented the senior leadership of Black September.<sup>1543</sup>

On November 22, 1974, the PLO achieved a groundbreaking diplomatic success with the adoption of resolutions 3236 and 3237 by the UN General Assembly. The resolutions recognized the Palestinians' right to national independence and admitted the PLO as an observer to the UN.<sup>1544</sup> As the PLO had become "*socially acceptable*", Barakat seized this opportunity to again press its demands for an official representation in Switzerland in a conversation with EPD deputy chief, Alfred Hohl on December 2, 1974 .<sup>1545</sup> Hohl declared that the Swiss would continue their policy of non-recognition vis-à-vis the PLO, but would accommodate a PLO observer bureau at the UN in Geneva. He also scolded the Palestinians for their arrogance vis-à-vis Israel after the

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<sup>1539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1540</sup> EPD, "Anruf Barakat" August 7, 1973, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1541</sup> Attorney General, "Der palästinensische Terror."

<sup>1542</sup> EPD, "OLP-Vertreter: Chronik" September 4, 1973, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

<sup>1543</sup> Péan, *L'Extremiste François Genoud—De Hitler à Carlos*, 339.

<sup>1544</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 3236 (XXIX). Question of Palestine.

<sup>1545</sup> EPD, "Gespräch mit Barakat" December 2, 1974, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

recent diplomatic successes, which mirrored that of the Israelis until the Yom Kippur War. Barakat indicated that there was a chance that the PLO would eventually recognize Israel but, for the moment, this could not be voiced publicly in order to preserve the PLO's inner unity. Moreover, he invited Hohl to visit Lebanon in January 1975 to get to know the leaders of the PLO and learn about their concerns.<sup>1546</sup>

Even another round of Palestinian violence affecting Switzerland was unable to deter the PLO's march to legitimacy. During a terrorist attack on the Hotel Savoy in Tel Aviv on March 6, 1975, two young Swiss tourists, Andreas Krähenbühl and Maria Roth, were killed. The PLO officially assumed responsibility for the attack.<sup>1547</sup> This presented problems for the Swiss diplomats as, at the same time, there were discussions around whether the PLO would attend the next Middle East conference later in the year in Geneva. Internal inquiries by the EPD revealed that Arafat may indeed face arrest by the Swiss authorities if he were to attend the conference, unless he travelled under official diplomatic cover and not simply as the chairman of the PLO. The EPD's Directorate of Public International Law warned that this would have "*unpleasant effects in terms of foreign policy*" and suggested that ways to get immunity for Arafat through an international organization be sought.<sup>1548</sup> Some elements in the EPD were obviously willing to undermine the criminal prosecution of terrorist acts not to repeat the events of 1969, when Switzerland had become the target of heavy Arab pressure and international terrorism. On April 16, 1975, the UN finally asked Switzerland to provide the PLO observer at the UN with the necessary privileges and immunities in order to fulfill his work. In addition, the Swiss were asked to provide office space for the PLO Office in Geneva. On June 25, 1975, the Federal Council decided to comply with the demand, authorizing the establishment of an official PLO Office in Geneva.<sup>1549</sup> As expected, Israel protested the decision. In a visit in September, the Israeli ambassador

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<sup>1546</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1547</sup> "Auffindung weiterer Terroropfer in Tel Aviv," *NZZ*, March 8, 1975.

<sup>1548</sup> EPD, "Yasser Arafat" April 2, 1975, CH-BAR#E2003A#1988/15#56\*.

<sup>1549</sup> Schweizer Bundesrat, "Ouverture d'un bureau d'observation de l'OLP (Organisation de libération de la Palestine) à Genève" June 25, 1975, CH-BAR#E1004.1#1000/9#819\*.



handed the EPD a paper, which made the case that Switzerland was not obliged to grant non-state actors any diplomatic privileges or immunity.<sup>1550</sup> There were, however, no consequences. Six years after the Kloten attacks, the PLO had an official presence in Geneva.

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<sup>1550</sup> EPD, "Vorsprache Botschaftsrat Lavie Israelische Botschaft" September 16, 1975, CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409\*.

## 8 Outlook and Conclusion

In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that in a world dominated by communication technologies and mass media, propaganda is usually not just one battlefield in the conflict, it is *the* battlefield. From Lebanon to Iraq, Western armies succeeded in dominating non-Western enemies, only to be repeatedly bested by non-Western insurgents in the area of propaganda. From the beginning, the Arab-Jewish conflict over Palestine was, to a significant degree, a media and propaganda battle. Never was this more obvious than in the late 1960s, when Palestinian terrorists sought to draw the world's attention to the Palestinian issue through spectacular attacks carried out on Western and Israeli targets. From the late 1960s onwards, Europe was the site of a comprehensive campaign to force the European governments to acknowledge the Palestine issue and normalize its relations with the PLO. This campaign was led by a diverse set of actors and used different means. These included diplomatic and economic pressure, terrorism and, to a significant degree, public diplomacy. Until the 1970s, a clear majority of Europeans sympathized with Israel. This manifested in the international wave of sympathy for Israel during the Six-Day War. The PLO, whose member organizations Fatah and PFLP engaged in terrorist and guerrilla warfare, was considered a terrorist organization. The pro-Israeli consensus in Europe incensed the Arab states, but also worried many European governments, including the British and the Swiss, which feared a deterioration of their ties with the Arab states and an escalation of terrorism against their citizens. These European governments therefore tended to accommodate the activities of Arab propaganda organs in Europe, as they sought a balance with the allegedly pro-Zionist Western public opinion. Unbeknownst to the public, European governments started negotiations with the PLO in the early 1970s. As a result, the PLO established an official presence in Europe, a presence which would eventually lead to its normalization. Even when it became clear that the PLO was connected to international terrorism, this evidence was conveniently ignored by European diplomats.

During the 1970s, there was a continuous shift in European public opinion towards the Arab view of the conflict. In addition, the Third World and the Non-Aligned Countries built pressure in international bodies to support the national struggle of the Palestinians

and to isolate Israel. This changing environment facilitated the start of the Euro-Arab Dialogue in 1974 between the EC and the Arab countries, a project which had also been advocated by the pro-Palestinian activists of CECAAMA.<sup>1551</sup> Although the Europeans succeed in excluding the PLO from the talk, they made several concessions in the course of the Euro-Arab Dialogue.<sup>1552</sup> In a parallel development, the Palestinians' national rights were recognized by the UN General Assembly in November 1974, and the PLO granted observer status.<sup>1553</sup> In August 1975, the conference of Non-Aligned Countries "*condemned Zionism as a threat to world peace and security and called upon all countries to oppose this racist and imperialist ideology (...)*."<sup>1554</sup> This tendency was taken up at the UN session in November 1975, when a bloc of mostly Muslim, African, and communist countries pushed for the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 3379 declaring that "*Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.*"<sup>1555</sup> The vote was accompanied by stormy discussions with the American ambassador to the UN Daniel Patrick Moynihan taking the lead in opposing

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<sup>1551</sup> "Meeting of the CECAAMA Executive Office on November 9-10, 1974, in Paris" December 4, 1974, CH-BAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218\*.

<sup>1552</sup> C. Musu, *European Union Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Quicksands of Politics* (Springer, 2010), 36–40.

<sup>1553</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "3236 (XXIX). Question of Palestine" (1974), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/738/38/IMG/NR073838.pdf>; United Nations General Assembly, "3237 (XXIX). Observer Status for the Palestine Liberation Organization" (1974), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/738/38/IMG/NR073838.pdf>.

<sup>1554</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "3379 (XXX). Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" (1975), <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/761C1063530766A7052566A2005B74D1>.

<sup>1555</sup> *Ibid.*

the resolution.<sup>1556</sup> To the shock of Israel's supporters worldwide, the UN General Assembly morally delegitimized Israel just twenty eight years after it had brought it into existence via the partition resolution 181. While the Europeans opposed such excesses of anti-Zionism, they also increasingly became more open to Palestinian demands. In 1977, the EC issued a statement, recognizing that the Palestinians had a right to a homeland and affirming that the issue stood at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This statement severely deviated from the Israeli position, which held that the non-recognition of Israel by the Arabs lay at the conflict's heart. The EC sought to settle the conflict in a comprehensive peace settlement including the Palestinians and the Arabs. These efforts failed. Rather, the American and Israeli approach of separate, bilateral negotiations proved to be successful at Camp David in 1979, when Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty. Eventually in 1980, the EC advocated the inclusion of the PLO in the peace negotiations, providing a de facto recognition for the organization.<sup>1557</sup> The PLO was no longer seen as a terrorist organization, but as a potential player in bringing peace to the Middle East. As discussed in this study, the central reason for accommodating the PLO was not the moral recognition that the Palestinians needed a national state of their own, but rather the fear of terrorism and economic repercussions from the Arab states. This is a fact that must be acknowledged. Whether this policy incentivized future terrorism, as some scholars have claimed,<sup>1558</sup> is a question worthy of further discussion.

This success was the culmination of an ongoing lobbying and propaganda campaign, which had started in the 1930s, and was only interrupted by World War II. The campaign was carried out by a transnational pro-Arab and anti-Zionist network, spanning the US and Western Europe, which consisted of Arab activists, institutions and native supporters. This transnational advocacy network had a remarkable institutional and personal continuity: The SMC under Amin al-Husseini was the original

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<sup>1556</sup> For a detailed discussion on the resolution and the opposition to it, see Gil Troy, *Moynihan's Moment: America's Fight Against Zionism as Racism* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford Univ Pr, 2012).

<sup>1557</sup> Musu, *European Union Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*, 36–40.

<sup>1558</sup> For instance David Carlton, *The West's Road to 9/11: Resisting, Appeasing and Encouraging Terrorism since 1970* (Springer, 2005).

driver of the internationalization effort. It was replaced by the AHC, which was equally headed by al-Husseini. In 1944, the nascent Arab League tasked Musa Alami with the setting up of Arab League Offices to coordinate the propaganda campaign in the West. However, his Offices were soon placed under the authority of the resurrected AHC. Thus, there was a smooth transition from the AHC to the Arab League as the primary body responsible for foreign propaganda. Some of Amin al-Husseini's original followers, like Izzat Tannous, were active in foreign propaganda institutions until the 1960s. Since the mid-1960s, the Arab League Offices sought to mainstream Palestinian nationalism by attaching PLO representatives to its offices. These PLO representatives eventually succeeded in establishing their own official PLO Offices in Western Europe and Canada since the mid-1970s. In Switzerland, the opening of this Office was condoned by the Federal Council in 1975. We are therefore able to speak of a single network with numerous sub-branches, the history of which is still evolving. Studies that deal with the changing attitudes towards Israel and Palestine in Europe and the Americas have to take the activities of this transnational advocacy network into account.

One area where this advocacy network was particularly active was the US, this despite the fact that Israel continues to enjoy significant support in the US. It has therefore often been contended that there was no significant Arab outreach in the US. Thus, Mearsheimer/Walt claimed in a widely read article in 2006 that *"pro-Arab interest groups are weak to non-existent, which makes the [Israel] lobby's task even easier."*<sup>1559</sup> Moreover, the pro-Palestinian campaign enjoyed greatest success in Europe and the Third World in the late 1960s and the first half of 1970, while the US remained opposed to the PLO until the late 1980s. It may therefore come as a surprise that the Arabs put the strategic focus of their propaganda campaign on the US until the Six-Day War. In the years of World War II, both the Arabs and the Zionists had become convinced that it was in the US where the future of Palestine would be decided after the war's end. In their tours before World War II, the Arab emissaries had learnt that there was a substantial base, consisting primarily of Arab-Americans and a mostly Protestant elite class of scholars, missionaries, diplomats and politicians, who sympathized with the

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<sup>1559</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 42.

national aspirations of the Arabs. It was therefore in the US where the Arab propagandists invested most of their resources. To their great disappointment, these efforts did not prevent the UN from endorsing the partition of Palestine in 1947. Still, the US remained central in the Arab strategy even after this defeat and it was therefore no coincidence that in 1955 the first Arab Office was again opened in the US, this time in New York and led by the Lebanese, Fayez Sayegh. They did not have to start from scratch (?), as they were assisted by an influential pro-Arab supporter base, which had constituted itself into the state sponsored AFME. The Arab League's New York Office served as a template for similar offices, which were later opened in Geneva, Bonn and other important cities in Europe and elsewhere. During the first four decades of the Arab propaganda outreach to the US, their message was decisively pro-American. Thus, the brochures of Khalil Totah's IAAA compared the Arabs positively to the American pioneers. Internal documents advised the Arab propaganda effort to focus on the Republicans, corporations involved in the Middle East and the "*Aryan upper class*", where they believed that they would find a more receptive audience than in "*Jew York*", as the Lebanese delegate to the UN put it.<sup>1560</sup> In the early years of the Eisenhower administration, the Americans kept their distance from Israel while looking with sympathy towards the Arab nationalists in the image of Nasser, who seemed to take the region by storm. The Arabs therefore had reasonable hope of winning over the American mainstream for their anti-Zionist policies. They did not give up hope on this until the Six-Day War. Against the advice of the State Department, President Lyndon Johnson, a philo-Semite who had helped Jewish refugees from being deported from the US before the Holocaust, steered US foreign policy in a decisively pro-Israeli direction.<sup>1561</sup> After 1967, as a result the US became the prime guarantor for Israel's security as well as its main supplier of arms. This increased the Arab nationalists' enmity towards the US. Thus, Fayez Sayegh came to the conclusion that the US was

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<sup>1560</sup> "Report of the Swiss UN observer in New York" February 27, 1957, CH-BAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388\*.

<sup>1561</sup> Robert David Johnson, *Lyndon Johnson and Israel: The Secret Presidential Recordings* (S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University, 2008); See Lenny Ben David, "A Friend in Deed," *Jerusalem Post*, September 9, 2008, <http://www.jpost.com/Features/A-friend-in-deed>.

the enemy of Arabs. When he became the head of the Arab Office in 1970, he no longer sought to convince the American mainstream, but instead build an alliance of marginalized groups, including the New Left, to constitute the core of non-Arab opposition to Zionism. Anti-Zionism became distinctively anti-American, something which had not always been the case.

A similar development was occurring in Germany. The social-democratic Left in Europe and the US, which was shaped by the catastrophe of World War II, rejected both Communism and Nazism. One central credo of this belief was that these horrors should not repeat themselves. This was the context which allowed the popular German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno to state that the *“demand that Auschwitz should not be repeated is the very first requirement of education. It is so much in the forefront of everything else that I do not believe I have to justify it or intend to do so.”*<sup>1562</sup> For progressive intellectuals like Adorno, though generally critical of nationalism, the historic circumstances made the existence of a Jewish nation state necessary. Arab propagandists identified this social-democratic Left as a central pillar of European support for Israel. Arab student movements present at German universities actively worked with their German colleagues to push the student movement in an anti-Zionist direction. After 1967, the left-wing support evidently started to crumble. While Arab propagandists were not the single reason, they were instrumental in it. Ideological changes within the Left and geopolitical events were responsible. The concurrence of the Vietnam war and the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 made it possible to construe them as instances of a single global war between an imperialist US and oppressed national liberation movements. Moreover, in a development the significance of which is still unrecognized today, in particular by the contemporary Left itself, the New Left embraced nationalism. Marxist class struggle was replaced by national struggle between oppressive and oppressed nations. This anti-imperialistic model had a complex pedigree. Anti-Imperialism was in fact never a functioning ideology, but rather a foreign policy strategy to recruit the Muslim, African and Asian enemies of the Western powers. It had been embraced by world powers like Germany and the Soviet

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<sup>1562</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “Erziehung nach Auschwitz,” in *Handbuch Bildungs- und Erziehungssoziologie*, Bildung und Gesellschaft (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2012), 125, doi:10.1007/978-3-531-18944-4\_7.

Union, but also by political movements like National Bolshevism and the New Left. The New Left failed to understand this and elevated what was basically a foreign policy strategy to an ideology. The New Left's anti-Imperialist ideology was also compatible with the far-right's own anti-Imperialism: Liberation Nationalism. As a result, anti-Semitic activists like Ahmed Huber or Hans Fleig easily managed to integrate themselves in the New Left. Activists like Huber used the Arab-Muslim world as a wall on which to screen their projections. It was construed as a counterimage of everything that they opposed in the West. The Arabs and Islam were not Jewish and Christian, capitalistic and materialistic. As shown in this study, sympathy for the Arabs and Islam on the Left and the Right fringe of the political spectrum was and continues to be often motivated by anti-Semitic and anti-Western prejudice. The New Left's turn against Israel has been a subject of heavy criticism – also within the Left, for decades. This debate is especially severe in Germany. Still, critics had glanced over the fact that there was a small but dedicated anti-Zionist movement in Germany between 1945 and 1967, which originated from the political Right. One of the earliest critics of New Left anti-Zionism, the writer Jean Amery, noted in 1969 that the military triumph of Israel in 1967 had come as a big relief to the Left, which now, free of remorse, “*could talk like the Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung*.”<sup>1563</sup> Indeed, the positions and slogans of the anti-Zionist Right before 1967 are often undistinguishable from that of the post-1967 anti-Israeli New Left, as I have shown in this study. From the perspective of the Arab League and the PLO, the decision to join their struggle with the New Left was primarily strategic.

The Arab propaganda outreach to the West pursued different strategies. The Arab-Muslim opponents of Zionism worked to extend the scope of the conflict in order to change the power balance between both sides. The rationale was clear. While the Arabs in Palestine enjoyed no international influence, the global community of Arabs and the Muslims did. The Arab-Muslim leadership under the guidance of the SMC and later the AHC thus succeeded in bringing the conflict to the attention of the wider Arab and Muslim world in the 1920s and 1930s. Parallel to this approach, it started a campaign in Western countries, which reached its climax during the years of the Arab

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<sup>1563</sup> Jean Amery, “Der Ehrbare Antisemitismus,” *Die Zeit*, sec. Kultur, accessed April 2, 2016, <http://www.zeit.de/1969/30/der-ehrbare-antisemitismus/komplettansicht>.



Revolt, 1936-1939. After World War II, the Arab League replaced the SMC and the AHC as the main institution behind the Arab propaganda campaign. Because of the diversity of their audience, it was necessary to frame the anti-Zionist message differently depending on the context. This meant that Arab propagandists worked to couch their opposition to Zionism in the arguments and language which was most comprehensible and acceptable to their target audience and strove to link up the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine with the popular causes of their times. As a result of this framing process, anti-Zionism was articulated differently depending on time and location. The propaganda directed towards the wider Arab and Islamic world always emphasized that the conflict was of a religious nature and that the Jews were the enemies of Islam. This propaganda contributed to the deterioration of the living situation of the Jewish communities in the Arab and Islamic countries, ending with their expulsion in the period between the 1940s and the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution. The distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, which is so central to the debate on anti-Zionism in Western scholarship, was therefore never relevant in this region, where anti-Zionist propaganda was always obviously anti-Semitic. On the background of this, the popular narrative that the Arab-Israeli conflict only underwent an Islamization since the rise of Hamas or that the aims of the Palestinian national elites “*were largely secular*”, as Meir Litvak has claimed, are questionable.<sup>1564</sup> In fact, the religious-Islamic element of the conflict was always intermingled with the national element, and this continues to be the case.

In Western countries, Arab propagandists tended to portray the conflict as a purely national and anti-Imperialist struggle of the Arabs for independence, usually in the form of a pan-Syrian or a pan-Arab state. They contended that Zionism was in contravention of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points. This appealed to widespread American suspicion regarding the foreign policy of European powers. In contrast to Arab propaganda in the Arabo-Islamic world, any religious motivation for anti-Zionism was usually played down. Arab emissaries to liberal Western democracies tried to avoid any impression of religious or anti-Semitic opposition to Zionism. This was already the case in the US in the 1920s and 1930s, well before anti-Semitism eventually became

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<sup>1564</sup> Meir Litvak, “The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Case of Hamas,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (1998): 148–49.

socially unacceptable after the Holocaust. Some Arab anti-Zionists, for instance Mitrie Ribhany, were genuinely opposed to anti-Semitism and fought Zionism on nationalistic and anti-Imperialist grounds. Often, the decision to abstain from anti-Semitism rested on strategic grounds. Thus, the foreign propaganda of the AHC was opportunistic. In countries where anti-Semitism was widespread or even a political force, like in Eastern Europe in the 1930s or in South America during the time of the UN discussion on partition, Arab propagandists appealed to anti-Semitic sentiment to raise sympathy for their cause. After World War II, Arab propagandists in the US again sought to emphasize that their struggle had nothing to do with anti-Semitism and that the Jews would be equal citizens of the future Arab Palestinian state. However, the recent collaboration of Amin al-Husseini with the Third Reich, to whom the Arab propaganda offices still reported and the persecution of Jews in Arab and Muslim countries undermined the credibility of the message that the Jews had nothing to fear in such a state. This contributed to their eventual defeat at the UN in November 1947.

Arab Christians played a key role in the outreach to Western audiences, both because they were better suited for the service in Western countries and because they emphasized the message of Muslim-Christian unity. When members of the Maronite community broke with this supposed unity and voiced support for Zionism, Arab nationalists reacted harshly. Most of the members of this selected group of Arab Christian nationalists had been educated at the Protestant elite institutions in the region, like the AUB. They spoke Western languages, often – with the possible exception of Khalil Totah – possessed a well-tempered disposition and could appeal to their audiences with rational and educated arguments. They were as far removed from the fiery rhetoric of the Palestinian national leader, Amin al-Husseini, as it is possible to be. Interestingly, neither Amin Rihani, Philip Hitti, George Antonius or Albert Hourani were Palestinians, but Lebanese. Emil Ghoury, the Western spokesman of al-Husseini, was a notable exception. Fayez Sayegh, who shaped the PLO's post-1967 propaganda approach in the US, equally descended from a family that had only very recently immigrated to Palestine from Syria. Their anti-Zionism was a product of their Arab nationalism, not of a Palestinian identity. There are even statements by Philip Hitti in which he is dismissive of the concept of Palestine. Their Arab Christian identity however was ambiguous and precarious. Solidarity between the Arabs notwithstanding their religious background was a stipulation of Arab nationalism, not a political fact in the region. The days of the recent Lebanese Civil War in 1960, which had resulted in

massacres against the country's Christians and a French humanitarian intervention – the first in history – preceded this generation by only 15 to 30 years. The Ottoman genocide against the Armenians, of whom many fled to Syria and Lebanon, was an event of their lifetime. It is therefore of little surprise that they embraced an ideology which decreed equality of all Arabs. However, despite these noble assertions and Arab nationalism's secular trappings, there was always a tension between Arab nationalism and Islam and, as a result, several played down their Christian heritage and openly praised Islam, like Philip Hitti did. However, not all Lebanese Christians made the same choices this groups of intellectuals did. In light of their own history as a minority suffering from persecution, many Lebanese Christians looked with sympathy upon the fact that the Zionists were gaining a foothold in Palestine.

The internationalization strategy, which the Palestinians had been pursuing since the beginning of the mandate until today, has been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it allowed them to maintain the struggle for their national rights. After the territory of the prospective Arab state in Palestine was split up in the Israeli War of Independence between Jordan, Israel and Egypt, for a short time it seemed like the issue of the Arab Palestinians would disappear from history. However, through Nasser, under whose auspices the PLO was founded in 1964, the question of Palestine was again put on the international agenda. The internationalization also allowed Palestinian leaders, like Amin al-Husseini or Yassir Arafat, to punch above their weight and become iconic and prestigious figures in politics – something which was only justified by their symbolic power and not their real power base, which was in fact very limited. However, the internationalization also contributed to make the realization of the Palestinian's national rights more difficult and has consequently prevented a lasting peace between Israelis and Arabs to this day. The internationalization increased the number of stakeholders in the conflict: The Muslims, Arabs, the European Left and other groups, who took sides with the Palestinians and have their own visions on how to solve of the conflict. Thus, Islamists see everything but a complete conquest of the Land of Israel as tantamount to surrender, leaving no room for negotiation. These stakeholders have made it more difficult for the Palestinians to come to a settlement with the Israelis and to find a solution to the conflict. One important step in the right direction would be to de-internationalize the issue and to place the conflict in its right proportions; as a regional conflict between two peoples, each one in possession of their national rights. However, as left-wing anti-Imperialists and Islamists have turned

the conflict into a central cornerstone of their political identity, it is doubtful if such a process can be achieved in the near future.

The Arab League and PLO propaganda campaign was accompanied by a terror wave against Western and Israeli targets. As shown in the case study, terrorists and propagandists maintained close contact, or were acting in both functions, as was the case with Fuad al-Shamali. This double strategy has also been observed with other actors, most notably with the Zionist-Revisionist paramilitary group, Irgun. Bruce Hoffmann has described the Irgun as the pioneer of this strategy.<sup>1565</sup> In fact, as I have showed in this work, the AHC already pursued such a double strategy during the Arab Revolt (1936-1939). While the AHC and bodies associated with it led the fighting on the ground in Palestine, AHC emissaries also staged an international propaganda campaign, which extended from the Middle East to the US. They were critical in raising public and financial support to sustain the revolt. They thus preceded the Irgun's own campaign, which started in 1944, by eight years. Whether the Irgun was inspired by the Arab model or the strategy was just the obvious one to follow cannot be ascertained. In Menachem Begin's book *'The Revolt'*, which was read by both Civil Rights activists like Nelson Mandela and Islamist terrorists like Osama bin Laden, we find no clue about this.<sup>1566</sup>

Despite ample documentation that such a pro-Arab, anti-Zionist network has been operating in Western countries for decades, the scholarly disinterest in it is striking. A search on Google Scholar for the terms 'Zionist lobby' or 'Jewish lobby' renders almost 4'800 results, more than ten times the number received than when using the terms 'Arab lobby' or 'anti-Zionist lobby', which results in little more than 460 entries.<sup>1567</sup> Moreover, very few scientists have ventured into the archives to test such narratives. Why has this network escaped closer scrutiny until now? As discussed, there was an

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<sup>1565</sup> Daniel Rickenbacher, "Bruce Hoffman: Anonymous Soldiers," *International Journal of Military History and Historiography* 37, no. 2 (2017).

<sup>1566</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Terror Years: From Al-Qaeda to the Islamic State* (New York: Knopf, 2016), 344–45; Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, Revised edition (New York: Dell Publishing, 1978).

<sup>1567</sup> Google Scholar search by the author on November 10, 2017.

anti-Zionist tendency in Oriental studies at least since the 1930s, when scholars with strong political convictions like Philip Hitti started pushing the field in a pro-Arab direction. Hebrew studies, which had given rise to prominent Zionist activists, were pushed out of Oriental departments. Oriental experts in academia and politics overwhelmingly opposed Zionism and sympathized with Arab nationalism. Leading activists, like Kermit Roosevelt, also painted the picture of Zionist control over US foreign policy making, which still dominates both popular imagination and academia.<sup>1568</sup>

The central problems of Arab propaganda in the West however were not that it was not influential, that it lacked funding or that it did not enjoy broad support, as it has been alleged by the likes of Roosevelt. The problem was that Arab propaganda advocated a goal which was unrealizable and undesirable. The political vision of a united Palestine under Arab dominance would have meant the destruction of the Jewish proto-state in Palestine, the Yishuv, in 1947, as the UN commission investigating the situation came to realize. After 1948, with the state of Israel firmly established, such a vision was even more out of touch with the facts on the ground. Only when the Palestinians started formulating a realistic goal, an independent nation state in the West Bank and Gaza, did they lay a lasting foundation for diplomatic success in the West.

Since the 1970s, the anti-Zionist near-consensus in the academic fields concerned with the Middle East was even strengthened under the impressions left by the works of Edward Said and his followers. Several generations of students of the Middle East were educated with the flawed impression that Western scholars of the Middle East were inimical to the Arabs and Islam and had misrepresented them.<sup>1569</sup> However, as shown in this work, the contrary tended to be the case. Instead of questioning the paradigms of Oriental studies or of Middle Eastern Studies, as the field is now mostly known, which included partisanship and an uncritical rejection of Zionism, recent scholarship continues in this tradition. This ideological bias, which is translated into an institutional bias at universities and research institutes, helps an understanding of this

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<sup>1568</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, "The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics," *Middle East Journal* 2, no. 1 (1948): 1–16.

<sup>1569</sup> see for instance Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979), 26–27, 272.

lack of research. We also have to remember that radical Arab groups have focused their activities on European and US universities since the 1950s, often with tangible support from Arab states, in particular Egypt. In Germany, groups like the GUPS gained the upper hand on campuses, dominating student politics for years, hand-in-hand with the New Left. University scholars need to reflect critically upon the effect this history has on their own research. Scholars need to show openness in questioning their own frames and biases. Knowledge can only be gained through the dialectical method, and research therefore only thrives in environments where there is diversity of thought. Dissenting voices should therefore not be marginalized at universities, as it is too often the case in our times, but rather encouraged. It is therefore my hope that my work will inspire and stimulate other scholars to undertake research in this field and thus improve our knowledge of these networks.

## Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office)
ACJ	American Council for Judaism
AACI	Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry
AHC	Arab Higher Committee
ALU	Arab Lawyers Union
AFME	American Friends of the Middle East
ANBRI	Arab National Bureau for Research and Information
ANL	Arab National League
AUB	American University of Beirut
ASFA	Association de Solidarité Franco-Arabe
ASRMO	Aide Suisse aux Réfugiés du Moyen Orient
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CAA	Committee for Arab Affairs
CAABU	The Council for Arab-British Understanding
CEECAMA	Comité Européen de Coordination des Associations d'Amitié avec le Monde Arabe
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
COS	Confederation of Oriental Students
DAG	Deutsch-Arabisches Gesellschaft
DArG	Deutsch-Arabisches Gemeinschaft
DG	Deutsche Gemeinschaft
EC	European Community

EEC	European Economic Community
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GUPS	General Union of Palestinian Students
GSP	Gesellschaft Schweiz-Palästina
GEMO	Groupe d'Etudes sur le Moyen Orient
IAAA	Institute of Arab American Affairs
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MP	Member of parliament
NEA	Division of Near Eastern Affairs
NSANL	Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League
PC	Palestine Committee
PIC	Palestine Information Centre
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
SMC	Supreme Muslim Council
SDS	Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund
UAR	United Arab Republic
UNSCOP	UN Special Committee on Palestine
YMMA	Young Men's Muslim Association
TAFA	The American Friends of the Arabs
ZOA	Zionist Organization of America



# Bibliography

## 8.1 Archives

### **AFZ            Archiv für Zeitgeschichte, ETH Zürich**

Erwin Jaeckle/49

JUNA-Archiv/563

### **ANLP           Papers of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, Columbia University Archives, New York**

ANLP 248.12           Palestine-Arab Refugees Office

ANLP 275.13           Arab Activities in the United States 1939-1949

ANLP 275.14           “”

ANLP 275.19           “”

ANLP 276.4           Arab Office

ANLP 276.5           “”

ANLP 286.8           League for Peace with Justice in Palestine

ANLP 286.9           “”

ANLP 286.11.           “”

ANLP 286.12           “”

### **ANF            Archives Nationales de la France (Pierrefitte)**

ANF 20000002/17   Centre des hautes études sur l'Afrique et l'Asie modernes

### **AWDP           Allen W. Dulles Papers, Princeton University Library, Princeton**

**BARCH      Bundesarchiv, Koblenz**

B136/4371      Veranstaltung der deutsch-arabischen Gesellschaft zu  
"Faschismus und Zionismus"

**CHBAR      Swiss National Archive, Bern**

CHBAR (018) 960.0/121	Fiche Hans Fleig, 1960-1978
CHBAR# E4320B#1968/195#239	Association internationale des Amis du Monde Arabe libre, 1957-1958
CHBAR#E1004.1#1000/9#819*	Bundesratsprotokoll, 1975
CHBAR#E2001D#1000/1551#260*	Fakoussa, Hassan Awas, 1939
CHBAR#E2001D#1000/1552#8771*	Arslan, Emir Chekib, Genf, 1937-1945
CHBAR#E2001E#1970/217#2388*	Errichtung einer Informationsstelle in Genf für Mitteleuropa durch die Arabische Liga, 1947-1957
CHBAR#E2001E#1972/33#5139	Errichtung einer Informationsstelle in Genf für Mitteleuropa durch die Arabische Liga, 1958-1960
CHBAR#E2001E#1976/17#516*	Errichtung einer Informationsstelle in Genf für Mitteleuropa durch die Arabische Liga, 1961-1963
CHBAR#E2001E#1978/84#1091*	Kritik an der Haltung der schweiz. Öffentlichkeit im Nahostkonflikt, 1967
CHBAR#E2001E#1978/84#848*	Errichtung einer Informationsstelle in Genf für Mitteleuropa durch die Arabische Liga, 1965-1967

CHBAR#E2001E#1980/83#921*	Beziehungen der Schweiz zu Algerien, 1967-1970
CHBAR#E2001E-01#1982/58#317	Palästina-Büro in Genf (Palästinensische Informations- und Kontrollstelle), 1961-1972
CHBAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#261	Palästinensische Befreiungsorganisation (1973-1975)
CHBAR#E2001E-01#1987/78#409*	Palästina-Büro in Genf, PLO-Mission, 1971-1975
CHBAR#E2003A#1988/15#56*	Bureau de l'Organisation de la libération de la Palestine OLP à Genève Vol. 1
CHBAR#E2004B#1987/77#195*	Regionalkonferenz Kairo 1973 / Handakten und Arbeitsp., 1973-1975
CHBAR#E2005A#1978/137#2078*	Schweizerisch-arabische Gesellschaft, 1965-1966
CHBAR#E2210.7(A)#1987/57	Espionnage, 1966–1969
CHBAR#E4320-01C#1996/203#176	Fiche François Genoud, 1934-1989
CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234#136*	Anschlag auf El-Al Flugzeug in Kloten 18. 2. 1969: September-November
CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/234#137*	Anschlag auf El-Al Flugzeug in Kloten 18. 2. 1969: Dezember 1969 – Juli 1987
CHBAR#E4320-05C#1995/390#1211*	Roger Henry, 1969-1970
CHBAR#E4320C#1994/120#781*	ARABIA, Studentenvereinigung, 1960-1987
CHBAR#E4320C#1994/120#782*	Union des étudiants arabes, 1962-1981
CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1209*	Comité de soutien au peuple Palestiniens
CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1214*	Rolf Lutz
CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1218*	Hans Ellenberger
CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1229	Palästina Komitee Zürich

CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1232*	Palästina Komitee Genf
CHBAR#E4320C#1995/390#1235*	Gesellschaft Schweiz-Palästina
CHBAR#E4320C#1995/392#135*	Anschlag auf EL-AL Flugzeug in Kloten 18.2.1969: Juni - August

**CIA            Central Intelligence Agency**

CIA Files on Johann von Leers

CIA Electronic Reading Room, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act

**CZA            Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem**

CZA A289-49	Arab Office
CZA S25/4153	Arab Propaganda outside of Israel
CZA S25/4156	“”
CZA Z4/31551	Correspondence of Eliahu Epstein

**ESP            Edward Spears Papers, Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's  
College, Oxford**

ESP 14.4    Correspondence Anglo-Arab Club and British Tunisian Society

**FBI            Federal Bureau of Investigation**

FBI FOIA files on James Madole.

**FSAC            Fayez A. Sayegh Collection, University of Utah, Salt Lake City**

Mid001 Bx 181 Fd 2	Correspondence and Phone Messages: D.Susskind 1967- 1968
Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 4	Correspondence with Elmer Berger 1954-1977

Mid001 Bx 239 Fd 8	“”
Mid001 Bx 240 Fd 3	Sayegh Correspondence: Appreciation and Congratulatory on Marriage (1960-1961): Marion G. Merkley
Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 3	Academic Correspondence, Stanford and Other Universities, 1959-1960
Mid001 Bx 283 Fd 5	“”
Mid001 Bx 293 Fd 5	Correspondence; Arab-Israeli conflict, 1948-1967; Refugees, Arab--Palestine

**HRSP        Harry Roscoe Snyder Papers, Stanford Libraries, Stanford**

HRSP 6.26	"The Jewish Problem," 1946-1986
HRSP 8.9	Director, American Friends of the Arabs, 1937-1941
HRSP 8.10	“”
HRSP 8.11	“”
HRSP 9.3	Grant, Elihu
HRSP 9.4	“”
HRSP 9.6	“”
HRSP 9.7	Hocking, William E., 1937-1938
HRSP 9.8	Hoskins, Halford L., 1937-1939
HRSP 9.12	Katibah, H. I., 1937-1938
HRSP 9.20	The New York Times (Arthur H. Sulzberger), 1938-1941
HRSP 9.21	Penrose, Stephen B. L., 1937
HRSP 9.34	Letters to prospective members, 1937-1938

**ISA        Israeli State Archives, Jerusalem**

ISA HZ-18/3          Arab Office in Geneva (Hebrew)

**NARA          National Archives and Records Administration, College Park**

NARA RG 59, entry 1301 box 41          Arab Information Office

**PA AA          Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin**

PA AA B130.6387A          Arabische Liga (bis 1962)

PA AA B36.289.          Büro der Arabischen Liga in Bonn

**PHP          Philip Hitti Papers, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis**

PHP 5.2          Correspondence: G 1945-1956

PHP 9.10          American University of Beirut, 1944-46

PHP 9.11          American Oil, 1944-46

PHP 9.24          Department of State 1941-1957

PHP 12.4          Zionism, 1944

PHP 12.6          Zionism, Correspondence, 1944

PHP 12.7          “”

PHP 21.2          Manuscript: From Lebanon to Princeton (in America), 1972

**TNA          The National Archives, London**

CO 733/370/8          Arab Centre: propaganda, 1938

CO 733/462/1          Policy: Arab Reactions and Propaganda, 1945

FCO 17/1394          Attitude of Council for Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) in London to Middle East, 1971

FCO 17/1612          Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO): proposed opening of PLO offices in London, 1972

FCO 17/1613	Proposed Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in London: possible visit by Yasser Arafat, Chairman; letters from members of the public, 1972
FCO 17/39	Activities of Society for the Advancement Arab-British Understanding, 1967
FCO 17/994	Council for Advancement of Arab British understanding and other Anglo Arab bodies, 1970
FCO 93/490	Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in UK, 1972-1974
FCO 95/961	Students: General Union of Palestine Students: Irish participation in Amman seminar, 1970
FO 371/45241	Arab unity and claim to Palestine: Arab propaganda in the United Kingdom and United States, 1945
FO 371/9016	Eastern: General. Code 65 Files 7493 (papers 8672 - end) – 11972, 1923
CO 733/462/1	Policy: Arab Reactions and Propaganda, 1945
CO 537/1741	Arab Propaganda: Washington Bureau 1945-46
CO 733/173/3	Reports on the activities of certain Moslem leaders, 1929 May-1930 July
CO 733/370/8	Arab Centre: propaganda, 1938
CO 733/427/8	Mr E. A. Ghouri, secretary of the Palestine Arab Party, 1940

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Burdett, Anita LP. The Arab League: British Documentary Sources, 1943-1963. 10 vols. Archive Editions, 1995.

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FRUS (Foreign Relations of the United States):

<https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS>

Hansard Online: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>

Kings-Crane Commission Digital Collection:

<http://www2.oberlin.edu/library/digital/king-crane/>

UN Official Document System: <https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp>

World War I Document Archive: <https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php>

#### 8.4 Newspapers and Magazines

AJR Information

Al Ahram

Al Baath

Algérie Presse Service

Al Nour

Al Jumhuriya

American Friends of the Middle East Annual Report

Arab Palestinian Resistance

Arabische Korrespondenz

Baghdad Observer

Basler Nachrichten

Berner Tagwacht

Bulletin of the Insitute of Arab American Affairs.

Christian Century

Christianity and Crisis

Congressional Record

Daily Telegraph

Das Magazin

Der Bund

Der Spiegel



Detroit News

Die Tat

Die Welt

Die Zeit

Duluth News Tribune

Egyptian Gazette

Facts (ADL)

Faribault Daily News

For Your Information (American Jewish Committee)

Free Republic

Images

Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz

Jewish Chronicle

Jewish Daily Bulletin

Jewish Frontier

Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Journal de Genève

La Suisse

Le Commerce Du Levant

Le Monde Arabe

Le Progrès Egyptien

Le Soir d'Algérie

Luzerner Neueste Nachrichten

Maariv

Mimbar El Islam

Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)

Neutralität

Opinion

Princeton Herald

Schweizer Illustrierte

Spectator

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Tages-Anzeiger

The Arab

The Forward

The Independent

The New York Times

The Sydney Morning Herald

The Times

The Universe

This Week

Voix Ouvrière

Volksrecht

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Weltwoche

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Zürcher Woche

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